

A FREE
EXAMINATION
OF THE
Common METHODS employed
TO
Prevent the Growth of POPERY.

**In which are pointed out their DEFECTS and
ERRORS, and the ADVANTAGES they give
PAPISTS.**

To which is added,
SEASONABLE REFLECTIONS,
Humbly offered to the Consideration of the Legislature.

D U B L I N:
Printed by D. CHAMBERLAINE, at Faulkner's Head
in Dame-street, facing Fownes's-street.
M DCC LXXIV.



Advertisement.

MOST of the following Tracts on the Popery Laws were originally published in a London News-paper, by Writers of different Judgments and Sentiments. The Debates began seasonably, at a time when an Alarm was sounded thro' *Great Britain*, of the Danger of Popery; and when in Consequence of it, great Pains were taken to fasten on English Catholics, *civil Principles*, which their Religion condemns; and inflict a Punishment which nothing but the avowal and Practice of *such Principles can justify*.

So late as the Year 1766; in the Reign of the mildest of Monarchs, and in a Land of Liberty, the Public have been repeatedly solicited to become Parties in an Accusation against innocent Men, and the Executioners of a penal Sentence pronounced in a former Age, when Circumstances very different from those which exist at present, gave *legal* Severity the Appearances of Self-defence, and in some Instances required *legal* Restraints.

Our present Times of Tranquility, and long Experience bear no Relation to those former Periods of frequent religious Changes, which soured the Minds of Men, and prompted to those persecuting Laws, which *each*

party *justified* and *condemned* in Turn, as each *prevailed* or was *degraded*, in the Contentions for Power.

These alternate Judgments according to the political Situation Men are in, give us in general, the strongest Proofs of human infirmity: — Far from indulging it, wise Legislators will guard against it, especially, if its effects on the public Good should be found injurious.

In Truth, penal Laws restrictive of *Civil Rights*, should not exist a Moment without the Presence of their proper Object. The Principles of British Catholics *in this Age*, operate only to Obedience impressed by their Religion *in every Age*. The Passions, the local Interests which *once* operated against that Obedience, have not only spent their Force, but absolutely lost their Spring: The Interests and Passions of the present Race are now set on the Side, and prepared for the Support, of Government. The Laws, the Maxims, and Opinions therefore, which prevailed under a *Tudor* or *Stuart* Race, are quite unfit for the present Times. --- They are quite hostile to the Spirit of our present civil Constitution.

That the Idea we have given is just, will be proved in the following Sheets, and on that Account, they should be very seriously perused by every Gentleman in particular, who is a Member of our Irish Legislature; who finds his best Lands occupied by Graziers

ers and Herdsmen, not by Tillers and Planters: His waste Grounds still in the State of Nature, instead of being converted into Arable, Meadows, and Improvements virtually forbid to Tenants living on a precarious Tenure, limited in Time, and limited in Profit. Under such a Dispensation of Things, this Kingdom can never arrive at the Prosperity and Consequence to which its Situation, Climate and Soil intitle it. --- Public Weakness there is, and is felt also most sensibly --- Papists should not be permitted to occasion any Part of it.

INTRODUCTION.

THE following Collection is the production of several hands. It appears pretty plainly that the Writers are of different Religions, and it is probable, that no more than two of them are acquainted with each other. The Letters wrote by the *Real Freetinker*, by the *Citizen of the World*, and three or four more were published in the Ledger; the rest of them would have appeared also in that Paper, if the Publisher had not shewn an unwillingness to admit any more upon that subject: this determined some persons of curiosity and reflection, desirous of having the matters treated here discussed, and cleared of doubt, as much as possible, for their own information, to have them brought together and laid before the public at one distinct view, like the unfinished pictures and statues of antient Greece, to be corrected or approved by the common sense of mankind.

The *Real Freetinker* has sufficiently explained the design of his Letters. For above a year before a late information was made, calculated to raise a tax upon the government, by trafficking in the Popish penal laws, the public papers were crouded with letters tending to inflame men against Papists; all the hackneyed artifices of rousing the jealousy and revenge of Protestants were run over; falsehoods and absurdities were industriously raked together, to leave an odious impression on the mind; particularly, the numbers of the Papists were strangely exaggerated, and the most rueful consequences foretold, if some speedy course were not taken against them: and all these preparatives were doubly secured by the menacing cry, of *false, fiery Papist*, and *unmasqued Jesuit*, immediately levelled at any body who durst be so hardy as to question a syllable of those slanders.

Time and experience has taught the Papists, that this is invariably the signal, or manifesto for oppressing them.

them. They were scared at the well-known omen; they were anxious and attentive; but did not know from what quarter, or in what shape the evil was to fall on them.

It is, I believe, evident to every attentive person, that the state of Popery in England is very contemptible and low. There are, indeed, some thousands of Irish Papists in London, who flock there on different views and occasions; and in a city of such prodigious traffick and influence, which draws a concourse of foreigners from all parts of Europe, there must be in proportion some thousands of foreign Papists, who croud the few Popish chapels; but the English Papists in the kingdom are very few and inconsiderable, if in our calculation we have respect to the number of the inhabitants, the tenacious nature of religious principles; and to a known truth, that little more than two hundred years ago, the whole nation was Catholic. Though the unceasing cry from Queen Elizabeth's reign to this day has been the *growth of Popery*, yet it is evident, that the falling away of Popery from that *Æra*, has been surprisingly rapid.

Instead of attempting to convince those Protestant Watchmen, of what they were perfectly convinced themselves, that their alarm was false and malicious, the *Real Freetinker* seemed to enter into their reasonings, in order to shew the absurdity of them.

It is impossible, on Protestant principles, to account for the growth of Popery in these kingdoms, where every temporal advantage acts against it. Deists object to the Scriptures, and to Revelation in general, that a rule of faith and practice given by God to man, must necessarily be intelligible to every body, and free from all doubt and obscurity; and they alledge, that the disputes and endless disagreements of men about the meaning of the Scriptures, are undeniable evidence, that they could not be intended by divine wisdom and power to teach men their Faith and Duty: but the objection becomes much stronger, not only against the divine regulations, but against the use of Reason, and the properties of truth, if we allow that error overwhelms the Truth, when both are equally well defended:

sended : for in that case, men must bow down under hopeless scepticism. He, therefore, began an Enquiry into the Causes of the Continuance and Growth of Popery in these Kingdoms, with this plain Protestant principle for his platform, that the oracles of Truth and Life, are levelled to the human understanding, and adapted to direct and convince men ; consequently, that if they fail to direct men, it is because they are neglected, and some less effectual, or different means substituted in their stead. He then proceeds to shew, that the most improper means imaginable for the propagation of Truth and Christianity are made use of, viz. Prosecution, Calumny, and Misrepresentation.

No doubt, he took this method on purpose to expose the prevarication of a set of men, who in Theory speak confidently of the Gospel, of Reason, and Truth, as their friends and seconds ; and yet by their infamous methods of attacking Popery demonstrate, that they have not the least dependence on the Gospel, or Truth, or Reason. His Enquiry into the Causes of the Continuance of Popery, furnished him with opportunities of laying open this odious insincerity. It is diligently to be remarked, that he supports himself every where with Protestant Principles ; that he supposes their cause to be the cause of Truth and of the Gospel. He sustains himself also by another great Principle, which all honest men ought to agree to, and which Protestants eminently lay claim to, viz. *That no party or church on earth is free from the controul of Truth, or has a right to consecrate Falshood.* He thinks he has a fair title to every concession which these two principles allow him ; and that it is disingenuous and against all fair rules of criticism to call him a Papist, for drawing unavoidable consequences from principles, which all Protestants of integrity are bound to adopt.

His Letters soon raised him antagonists, and like true modern controvertists, they fell foul on every thing he advanced. It was in vain for him to give them notice that he engaged on Protestant Principles, they were shewn no more mercy than Popery itself. It was sufficient to condemn them, that they were unfavourable to the dear design of prosecution. Those gentlemen seemed

ed to lay it down as a maxim, that the Protestant Religion has no evidence from Reason, or its own Truth, and has no dependence, but on the same kind of argument with which Mahometans propagate their religion, and with which the old Heathens opposed Christianity. One of them who calls himself *No Smotherer*, in the Ledger of March 8. avers, "That the Laws against Papists, are the only restraint that prevents our being outnumbered and overrun by them." The *Real Well-wisher to Reformation*. March 22, goes further. His words are very remarkable. "Where then, says he, I would ask the *Freethinker*, are the Truth and Reason which he pretends would stop the mouth of a Papist? some where I fancy in the clouds, from whence this *Real Freethinker* will, perhaps, exhibit them." And Antipapista says, May 3. that Popery in fact renders Falshood an overmatch for Truth, and makes Absurdity triumph over Reason. What do these gentlemen mean? but that Popery has a superior power of conviction, and is to be resisted only by prosecution. For when you say that Falshood is an overmatch for Truth, what do you but change the names of things, and call that Falshood, which the rest of mankind call Truth? Since the only method we have, and the very criterion for discovering Truth, is by its superior conviction. I must observe, that Antipapista attributes the prevalence of Popery, not to any force of convincing the mind, but to the absolute dominion it exercises over the assent of men. But this is only removing the difficulty one step further off, and putting the Elephant under the world to support it, since Popery founds its absolute dominion on Proofs and Reasonings, which lye open to Examination and Trial; he must hold therefore, that the Proofs and Arguments for that Dominion, must prove an overmatch for Truth and Reason, otherwise it will never make way in England, where men must be convinced before they become Catholics.

They trampled no less on his second Principle, *that all considerations should give way to Truth*. They think his examination and rejection of certain idle and absurd stories that were useful against Popery, sufficient to discover him to be a Papist. One would imagine by the defence

defence they made, and the abuse they cast on him for weeding away those frivolous Legends, that Falshoods are the best guards against Error; that Crimes and Calumnies form the proper Defence of Truth against Popery, and that the method of maintaining true Christianity, is to revile and slander its Enemies.

As these Letter-writers were resolved to defend every Lye, and every Absurdity of the most absurd of their Party, they became Evidences to the Public of all the Prevarications he charged on weak Protestants. They defended the Tale of Pope *Joan*; they proved from Letters and Numbers that the Pope is Antichrist; they passed sentence on all the Papists in England promiscuously for the Gunpowder-Plot, and regretted, that king James interposed to save his innocent subjects from the public fury; they assert, that a Papist is put into the hands of a magistrate as an enemy convict to the State, or a thief is brought to the Old Bailey; and so far forget their principles, as to maintain that a Papist is a disobedient subject, because he does not comply with such of the Laws of his Country, as interfere with his Faith and religious Opinions. In short, they prove that in their opposition to Popery, they pay no regard to truth or justice, to virtue or humanity, and that they scruple not to employ every vile art and falshood against it; and this was partly the reason why the *Freebinker* took little pains to answer them, because they themselves did his work effectually. Another reason why he took little notice of their answers, is mentioned in one of his Letters. They kept wide of his *tract*, and neither denied directly his Principles nor the consequences he drew from them. They admirably understood the art of perverting his Arguments, of making advantage of the odium and prejudice of men against Popery; they understood all the tricking part of Controversy, but they knew not how to make use of simple Truth, and were not aware of its Power. I come now to speak of the Essays from our Club, of which the reader will see some account hereafter. The Controversy appeared to us curious and interesting: accordingly, we canvassed the Merits on both sides. In the course of our Reflections, a Gentleman, whom we hear with pleasure, made the observations

observations contained in the Letter signed *Fair Plea*, which was laid before the Public in order to obtain direct Answers to the *Freethinker's* Complaints, in his latter Thoughts he imagined, that the *Real Freethinker* did not comprehend the full Extent of his own Arguments, and that he unwarily pleads for the most restrained toleration for Popery, by attempting to convince his Antagonists of Mistake ; whereas, he ought to have observed, from all the Circumstances of the Debate, that they were in no Error of Judgment, but that their Calumnies and Prevarications, were only calculated for the purposes of Prosecution and Enmity ; and that the particular men who used them, resigned all Hopes of Success from the Merits of their Cause, and steered against Popery only by the Compass of Prosecution. I have little more to add to the History of these Letters, but to say something about that part of this Examination which has not appeared in the Ledger.

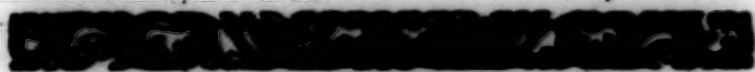
The Essays that follow the Letter, signed *Fair Plea*, are to be considered as merely hypothetical, and writ in a state of Doubt and Curiosity, to obtain the Judgment of the ingenuous and candid. Among the learned and ingenuous, those men who have turned their Thoughts that way, and examined the Subject, may cast Light on what seems obscure and impenetrable to others of equal or greater Parts, whose Reflections, and Studies have taken a different Path. If this Method of Enquiry were generally made use of, the whole Abilities and Genius of mankind would be united in Discoveries, where, in the ordinary way, single men must labour heavily, and slowly. The *Greeks* practised it, who in so short a Time, from striking out the first sparks of Philosophy, so wonderfully enlightened and dignified the human Mind. The Art of Printing makes such a Communication easier to us ; but then we must set about it with *Grecian* Tempers, and *Grecian* Candour. They had a mighty and pure Passion for Truth ; and if any Man ventured to raise his Eyes, and look beyond the Crowd, he was not attacked with Revilings and Abuse. The Temper of men's minds seems to be more rugged and intractable in this harsh Climate ; it is by long Study and Pains we come to that ingenuous and candid
Disposition

Disposition which they set out with: and I fear, that few will make a Figure with any Grace in the free Enquiry after Truth, who have so much winter in their Constitutions, except the few whose Minds are softened and civilized by Philosophy, and who have Souls capable of bearing the shocks which Truth will sometimes give their Prejudices.

A FREE



A FREE
EXAMINATION, &c.



To the PRINTER of the PUBLIC LEDGER.

LETTER I.

Feb. 13.

AS several Letters have lately appeared in the public Papers, complaining of the great increase of Papists in this metropolis, with different proposals for reducing them; I wonder no body in this philosophic and inquisitive age, has thought of examining into the causes of this growth of Popery, or has attempted to discover why it has made a progress, or even a stand, under the many disadvantages that it confessedly has to contend with. It is certainly an object of curiosity to discover the latent methods by which Popery is upheld, and the human mind influenced against interest, reason, and eloquence; it is of great importance too, because a knowledge of the secret supports of Popery, and its methods of propagation, will shew men upon principle and evidence how to obstruct and traverse them: but this necessary kind of knowledge the Writers against Popery seem very deficient in, both by the causes to which
B they

they attribute its growth, and the vague, unsatisfactory schemes they offer against it.

We find the general motives that determine men in the profession of their Religion, are either the interests of this world or of the next : (for, the prejudice of education being equal on both sides, is out of the question.) The motives of this world, in Great Britain and Ireland, are all against the Papists. Priests and Jesuits have, on their side, no benefices to allure men with, no commissions in the navy or army, no employments in the law or at court, no places or pensions. Those, whom they persuade over to their Religion, know well that they and their posterity, while Papists, must labour under great disadvantages, and be liable to several hardships and exclusions : and, accordingly, we generally find those who have any thing to lose, are proof against the arts or arguments of Popery ; and the Popish Priest has no chance, but amongst the people, who are disengaged from worldly considerations, and who think they chuse their Religion sincerely, and for the sake of their eternal salvation. It is plain then, that the whole art and address of Popery is to assume the fair appearance of truth.

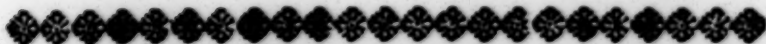
However obvious it be, that the success of the Popish Religion depends upon its assuming the semblance of truth, it is necessarily remarked, because it leads us to the decisive enquiry, viz. *From what strange measures, from what secret management does it happen, that the Papist should be able to give his cause the appearance of truth?* He himself believes his tenets to be true, and is not therefore surpris'd at their prevalence ; but the Protestant, who sees the whole fabrick of Popery rais'd on ignorance and error ; who sees the Popish Priest struggling through absurdities against the superlative force of truth and reason, is justly astonish'd at the unaccountable manœuvres and mysterious resources, by which he makes a progress, or even maintains ground, without being utterly overwhelmed. There is not a proposition in Euclid more obvious, than that truth and reason, equally supported, are, by vast odds, an overmatch for falshood and nonsense. But let us consider, on the Protestant side, the advantages of interest, the learning of
its

its ministry, their superior address and eloquence ; and we shall plainly see, that the success of Popery, in such an unequal opposition, must be owing to some gross mistakes in the methods taken to support the Protestant, and weaken the Roman Catholic Religion ; for no efforts of art can signify, on the weak side, in such an unequal match, against equal exertion and address.

A discovery, therefore, of the false steps made in the suppression of Popery, and of the arts by which these mistakes are improved by Papists, will undoubtedly do more service to the cause of rational Christianity, than can possibly be done by sending forth Informers or Constables to plant or restore the Gospel. If any other Writer will pursue this subject, and point out causes equal to the effects, I will trouble you no more ; but if nobody else does so, I will attempt this curious and interesting enquiry.

I am, &c.

A real FREETHINKER



A rational Enquiry into the secret Causes of the Continuance of Popery in these Nations.

LETTER II.

PERHAPS there was no necessity to prove to Protestants who are sensible of the weakness of Popery, that it could never gain ground, or even maintain itself in these Kingdoms, if the Protestant cause had been supported judiciously ; because Truth and Reason, equally well defended, will for ever appear superior to Error and Falshood ; but this clear and striking observation brings us to the important question, which I would fain have discussed by the ingenuous and candid, viz. *What are the false steps made in the support and establishment of the Protestant Religion, that enables Popery to make a stand before it ? or by what latent means does it come to pass, that the Popish Religion is not overwhelmed in so unequal a competition ?*

I believe every man, who has the least acquaintance with the spirit and genius of Christianity, expects that it should be propagated by its Teachers and Preachers; and is shocked when he sees the civil Magistrate bear the heat and burden of the day, while the Clergy slumber in the Vineyard, with Gospel-arms in their hands. When a reverend Prelate, who hath large possessions and honours, in one of the most conspicuous posts in the Kingdom, for defending the cause of Religion, retires from the service, and sends forth Constables and Informers in his stead to overthrow Popery, and to enforce the Gospel; it is no wonder the effect should be answerable to the means, and that every by-stander, who for the most part judges by appearances, should conclude, that if his Lordship knew of any better defence, or any other practicable method of conversion more agreeable to the spirit of Christianity, he would certainly make use of it. Every body supposes that his Lordship is acquainted with the *fort* and *foible* of his cause, and takes the most promising measures accordingly.

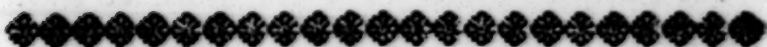
The Reformation holds out to view its own Charter, or rather the very principle of its existence, viz. *Liberty of Conscience*, and *the Evidence of Common sense*. Whoever robs it of that, robs it of its very life and being, and mortally wounds it, as far as systems or doctrines are mortal. When the unthinking Protestant openly declines the method of examination and evidence, and appeals to the conviction of fines, imprisonment, and penalties, the sly Jesuit slips to the other end of the argument, that is now left to him, and appeals loudly to Truth and Reason. "But alas, (says he) what Truth or Reason is to be expected from people who have taken up the principle of Liberty of Conscience merely for convenience, who retain it in Theory, but abjure and disclaim it in Practice." It is stupidity to imagine, that Papists will not make the most of advantages thrown so directly in their way, or that such open self-condemning duplicity will not have its proper effect, I mean that of confirming the Papists in their opinions, and of laying Protestantism open to the Bishop of Bangor's unanswerable objection.

It is a remarkable case, and worthy our reflection, that there is no Country on earth where the Papists are so industriously reformed by forfeitures, gavels, informations, restraints, premunires, and penalties, as in Ireland; nor any Country where Popery, unassisted by all visible means, makes such a stand against the Reformation. In short, there is a further law requisite against Popery, to give the present laws success; and that is, an act to take away men's senses, before they will believe that Informers, Constables, and Lawyers, are the genuine successors of the Apostles and Guardians of Christianity; or that the persecution of people for mere matter of opinion, is reconcileable to Liberty of Conscience.

Having made it pretty evident, that the growth of Popery is not, as is generally believed, owing to the inactivity of the civil Magistrate; I shall endeavour in a series of Letters to lay open the real, though secret, causes of the continuance and increase of Popery in these kingdoms.

I am, &c.

A real FREETHINKER.



A rational Enquiry into the secret Causes of the Continuance of Popery in these Kingdoms.

L E T T E R III.

TH E effects of neglecting to attack Popery, with the irresistible power and advantages of truth and conviction, and the whimsical methods of convincing them by the arguments of the civil Magistrate, do not end when the laws have been duly executed. The remote consequences do infinite mischief to the Protestant cause. The Protestant Clergy, as I observed in my second Letter, are too apt to leave the conversion of Papists to the scourge of the law; and think they have done their duty sufficiently, when they have given information to the next Justice of the Peace of Priests and Mass-houses, and added so much of the Preacher's of-

sice to that of the Informer's, as inflames the Magistrate to lift up the iron-rod. This spirit is not peculiar to the Clergy; it seems to have seized all kinds of men who attack Popery for the same reason; that is, they are habituated to expect the reduction of Popery from the zeal of the Magistrate; and therefore their whole end and aim is, to render Papists odious and obnoxious to the laws.

A settled design and determined drift to render any man or party odious to the Public, and obnoxious to the laws, may attain its end while the passion is heated and kept up: but in the human mind there is a reflux when the passion is cooled, that brings it back as far to opposite views and sentiments; and we are apt to look on those who have been too warmly accused, as objects of particular pity and favour. In cases of controversy and litigation, it has always been found fatal, to give the reins to passion, insomuch that it does mischief and wrong even to the cause of truth, to defend it by prevarication and falsehood, because it gives a skilful adversary an opportunity of raising a prejudice against the truth, by exposing the prevarication and calumny of the defence.

The Bishop of Meaux, the most artful and successful champion that ever entered the lists for Popery against the Reformation, formed his attack wholly against the prevarication and intemperate zeal of some weak Protestants, who did not care what they writ against Popery, provided they rendered it odious. These misrepresentations were in fact no objection to the Reformation, which ought to stand or fall only by its own evidence and truth, and not by the vice or folly of any of its professors; and when we consider the number of the reformed in Europe, it is no wonder several individuals amongst them should be weak and abandoned. However, it is not easy to separate the cause from the men. These misrepresentations gave room to the Bishop of Meaux to exert his whole art and genius, which were both great, against the Reformation; and accordingly his Exposition, his History of the Variations, and his other Pieces, did irreparable damage to the Protestant cause in France. The other writers of the Popish party,

ty, seeing his success, followed his track, and every stroke they struck wounded deeply, because it aimed at a vulnerable and defenceless part.

Mr. Bayle, the most penetrating and best writer by far amongst the reformed of France, saw the drift of the Bishop of Meaux, and endeavoured to guard against it. He conceiving justly the prudence of Mr. Basnage and Mr. Blondel, the most judicious advocates of the Reformation in France, meditated to give up all that was indefensible, and, like a prudent General, to collect his forces, and chuse his ground, where it was tenable. He, advises Protestants, along with the two writers I mentioned, not to contend that Luther, Melancthon and Bucer, did not give a written approbation to the Landgrave of Hesse, to marry a second wife in the life-time of the first; or that such a person as Pope *Joan* ever existed. He also clears away several absurd stories, invented or published by Protestants, of some of the Popes, so as to give occasion to the Consistory of the Walloon Churches of Rotterdam, to rebuke him for making Protestant writers appear rash accusers.

Weak Protestants, like the Consistory, may imagine that Mr. Bayle, by rejecting these foolish calumnies that were thrown out among the vulgar, did harm to the Protestant interest. But Roman Catholics, who feel where their own strength lies, think far otherwise: for while Burnet is held up to view, like a Butt, by the Bishop of Meaux, and every young controvertist in the schools of France, drags out Jurieu to triumph over him, the reading of Bayle is forbid under the strictest Ecclesiastical censures. The truth is, weak Protestants by an obstinate defence of Luther, of the fable of Pope *Joan*, and their misrepresentation of several Popes, did irreparable mischief to the Protestant Cause, by affording a handle to their artful adversaries, to charge the whole body of Protestants with calumny, guile and falsehood. If Burnet had not injudiciously set up Cranmer as an Apostle at the infancy of the Reformation in England, he had not afforded such a field of triumph to the Bishop of Meaux, nor the opportunity of attacking the reformation in England with such seeming force and candour. Whereas, in fact and truth, the Reformation

is no more concerned, whether Cranmer was a pious Prelate, who had the integrity and firmness of an Apostle, or a temporizing Parasite, who made his market by sanctifying the King's lusts and cruelty, than it is whether Henry was a good or wicked Prince.

The attempt of Basnage, of Blondel, and Bayle, was worthy of those great men, and expressive of their superior and high idea of the truth and goodness of the cause they defended. They aimed to level with the ground, the foundation of the success of the Popish writers; and to rest the Protestant cause on the evidence of truth and reason.

I am, &c.

A real FREETHINKER.



A rational Enquiry into the secret Causes of the Continuance of Popery in these Kingdoms.

LETTER IV.

IN my last Letter, I took notice in general of the irreparable damage, the inconsiderate zeal of weak Protestants does to the Reformation. Indeed, a greater misfortune cannot happen to a good cause, than to be defended by men of warm hearts and weak heads. There are, no doubt, a set of people who think it were better the story of Pope Joan, and the witchcraft and sorcery of several Popes, were still insisted on, and displayed in Protestant Books of Instruction for Youth; and who think the inflexible Christianity and Integrity of both Luther and Cranmer, when they were solicited by Princes to make Religion bend to their passions; and in short, all the falsehoods that impiety or ignorant zeal ever invented, or contended for, against Popery, were defended through thick and thin. To this class of disputants, it might be observed, in order to give them a sense of the mischief they do, that misrepresentation cannot serve to convert the Papist, but rather to confirm him effectually in his own opinions, as well as in his prejudices against the Reformation, and that it gives a candid

candid discerning Protestant a suspicion of the integrity of his brethren, and of the cause they defend by such unworthy means. But as it is in vain, perhaps, to reason with bigots of any persuasion, all that an unbiassed and virtuous Protestant, who is convinced that he has truth and reason to support him, can do, is to renounce publicly all misrepresentation, to attribute to its real origin the folly and weakness of certain individuals, and to rest the cause of the Reformation on the evidence of truth alone.

The ingenious expedient of forming and publishing tenets for Papists, which they neither believe nor teach, but the very reverse of what they inculcate, in their Sermons, Catechisms, and Rules of Faith, is ludicrous enough. A man is introduced upon the stage with a very good effect, who is persuaded to profess himself a Physician against his own knowledge; and the Comedy is certainly equally high, to attempt to make Romanists believe, that they are mistaken in their own tenets, and that they actually believe what they do not believe. If those wise Creed-makers had combined to make the world imagine, that the Popish tenets were impregnable, and could not be attacked with any hope of success, unless they were misrepresented, I defy them to take any other course half so effectual. The watchful and indefatigable Popish Priest, who lets no advantage slip, makes a most unmerciful use of this Childish stratagem. He does not fail to call upon his followers as witnesses, that he never preached rebellion or disloyalty to them, but on the contrary, took every occasion to impress them with the principle of passive obedience to the Constitution, and of gratitude and affection to a King, to whose lenity it is owing, that they are treated as subjects; and enjoy the common rights of humanity. He appeals to them, if they were ever taught, that it was lawful, or dispensable, to break faith with Heretics. He cannot fail observing to them, that even Protestants have no need of witnesses to this point, seeing that the whole kingdoms of England, Ireland, and Scotland, are witnesses to it: for the Catholics of these nations, suffer publicly the hardships of the laws by their sincerity. They pay double taxes here; they suffer by informati-

ness, incapacities and restraints in Ireland ; they bear the loss of property and power : they bear insults and a variety of disadvantages, merely because they cannot dispense with their integrity, or make profession to those they esteem Heretics contrary to what they think the truth. He has an unanswerable argument, which they cannot be inattentive to, that the very people who charge them with the doctrine of dispensing with the breach of faith to Heretics, while they make Laws against Popery, give indisputable evidence of a consciousness of the sincerity of Papists by principle ; since those Laws could never operate, if the Papist had not been obliged by principle to suffer all things for the sake of sincerity to those he calls Heretics. The people the Priest appeals to are perfect judges in this case ; they know what doctrines they have been taught, and the conclusion they naturally make from this absurd dispute is, that the Reformation can attack Popery only by misrepresentation and imposition. Is it not provoking, to see Protestants take pains to raise prejudices in the candid and honest part of mankind against themselves, and draw a suspicion on their cause, by the dissingenuous artifices under which they attack Popery ?

When the Papists of England, Ireland and Scotland, who suffer so much for making a sincere profession of their faith, publicly profess and teach, that the power of the Pope beyond his own territories is merely pastoral ; and when they assert their readiness to defend their King and Country, against all temporal jurisdiction of the Pope, with their lives and fortunes, they ought by all rules of reasoning to be credited, especially when the same doctrine is known to be publicly taught and universally inculcated by the Popish clergy of France, and in all the French universities ; unless we suppose the Popish principles to be different in England, from what they are in the Nations on the Continent. There is another Popish doctrine concluded on here by wise folks ; it is that the Pope is infallible and impeccable, though every man who visits the city of Rome knows, that the Pope there professes himself a Sinner, and hath his Confessor publicly, to whom he confesseth his sins.

Luther

Luther, and the first Reformers, inveighed bitterly against the Popish Seminaries of learning; and there are severe laws in this kingdom against them: but since knowledge is the guardian of truth, and enemy of error, it is a paradox to me, what service it can do to the Reformation to keep papists in ignorance; or why learning is not rather encouraged by our laws among them, especially the mathematicks, and those sciences that tend to give the mind an habit and readiness to discern truth. It is equally unaccountable to me, that they should be obliged to seek for learning in foreign countries, to receive their early impressions under governments so different from ours, and to estrange their youthful attachments from the tenderest constitution to her children on earth, the mother of heroes and the generous guardian of the liberties of mankind. I cannot here avoid taking notice of the vulgar opinion, that Roman Catholics discourage learning, and look upon ignorance as the mother of devotion. In order that this intelligence should gain credit, it would be absolutely necessary to have an Act of Parliament passed, to prohibit Protestants from visiting Popish countries, or from going Ambassadors to them, that the inhabitants of these nations, may not discover the flourishing state of learning there, nor that Priests are at the spring-head, dispensing knowledge to mankind. It is equally necessary to forbid the Translators of books wrote by Papists, since they are indubitable evidences of the learning and communicative disposition of their Authors.

Since it is hardly possible to persuade Roman Catholics that they believe what they do not believe, and since the dissimilarity of misrepresenting them must offend candid and discerning Protestants, it is evident, that such paltry shifts and subterfuges, used preposterously, instead of the invincible powers of truth and reason, must prove detrimental to the Protestant Religion and favourable to Popery *. I am, &c.

A real FREETHINKER.

* The first Letter against the Real Freethinker appeared in the Ledger of March 8, under the Signature of No Smotherer.

Smothered. The Writer does not offer to contest any Principle, or any Consequence of the Real Fruehliker's, but contents himself with asserting, that it is not for their offensive Worship the Papists are undrest, but for their principles of Persecution, Sedition, and Rebellion.

In the following Ledger, T. N. stands up with warmth in support of the veracity of the Legend of Pope Joan, under the authority of Spanheim; who, he says, has made the Truth of it as clear, as that there are columns in the Rainbow, or light and heat in the Sun-beams. He observes, that the Bishop of Meaux has without any Disguise, acknowledged the great wickedness of some Popes. He runs into some of the contested Points of Doctrine and is offended with the Clergy for attempting to be independent on the civil Power for a Maintenance, trusting to which he affirms their sacred Master left them. In a future Letter (May 10.) he obliges the curious with a circumstantial History of the Life and Adventures of the female Pope.

In the same Paper J. P. says, that in the heat of Controversy between Papists and Protestants, it is no wonder several things may be alleged upon slight grounds to stigmatize the opposite Party; but yet, that many solid Arguments have been published by Protestants against the tenets and practices of Popery. He wonders with what face Papists can desire a Toleration which they do not grant; and observes that they have no Reason to complain of the strict Execution of the Laws against them.

The real Well-wisher to Reformation, (March 22,) determines that Papists are related to the civil Magistrate as Enemies to the British Government. He observes, that an Excommunication was pronounced against some of his Majesty's Predecessors by the Pope. He asserts roundly, that the same Excommunication was denounced against their Protestant Descendants, and that Papists hold, that a King excommunicated or deposed by the Pope, may be deposed and murdered by his subjects. The direct result of which is, that every Papist, submitting himself to the Authority of the Pope, must hold himself bound to assassinate the Sovereign upon the Throne, whenever an Occasion should be offered. In proof of this extraordinary assertion, he produces himself as Evidence; and affirms, that he heard some of the braver sort of Papists acknowledge themselves

themselves bound to murder the King; but he has not told us, why he neglected to get the Traitors secured, or why he became an Accomplice in concealing such an atrocious fixed Design against the King's Life. He singles out Chillingworth and Barrow's Books as solid refutations of Popery. He takes notice, that a Pension from the court of France to Blondel, for writing his Book against the Legend of Pope Joan, was spoken of; and that Bayle, in his Critic on Mainbourg, has exposed several Facts disgraceful to Popery.

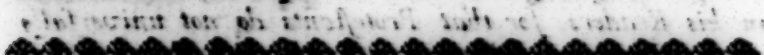
A Gentleman, who styles himself an Heretic Freethinker, in this Paper, speaks to part of the Freethinker's fourth Letter. The Passage he censures runs thus: "Protestants have no need of Witnesses to this Point (the good Faith of Catholics to the Reformed) seeing that the whole Kingdoms of England, Ireland, and Scotland are witnesses to it; for the Catholics of those Nations, suffer publicly the Hardships of the Law by their Sincerity. They pay double Taxes here, they suffer by Informations, Incapacities, and Restraints in Ireland. They fear the Loss of Property and Power. They bear Insults, and a variety of Disadvantages, merely because they cannot dispense with their Integrity, or make Profession to those they esteem Heretics, contrary to what they think the Truth." To this he answers, that the Real Freethinker is either mistaken in the nature of the Charge alledged against Papists, or rather seeks to impose on his Readers, for that Protestants do not universally charge Papists with keeping no Faith with Protestants; but whenever the Interest of their Church is to be served, or any destructive, essential Blow aimed at Protestants, in which case he avers, they make no scruple of breaking the most tremendous solemn Oath. — April 5, he re-assumes his Subject; he quotes a Passage from Mr. Locke, which he applies in support of his Argument, and produces an Instance of the breach of Faith of Catholics, the Affair of John Hunt, Queen Mary's Believer, to the Men of Suffolk; and King James the Second's breach of his Coronation Oath, to preserve the Religion and Liberties of his Subjects; and he closes with a résumé of a Sermon of the Archbishop of Canterbury, in which are recited some

common

common-place Accusations against Popists, without notice taken of their Answers.

To avoid repetition, I will here animadvert only on the foundation of this Gentleman's Reasoning. The Fidelity to Principle, which he attributes to Catholics, is chimerical, and not to be found in human Nature. That a few men may hold all worldly motives in contempt, and faithfully adhere to their Principles is credible, though in the most pious ages of Christianity, the world did not abound with them. But when a man asserts that a whole Body of People, such as the Catholics of Great Britain and Ireland, will not, through self-interest, or for the interest of their Families; for the sake of worldly Power, or Riches; through Pride, or fear of Poverty, dispense with their Faith to Heretics, and yet are ready to do it for the interest of their Church, he is out of the reach of Conviction, and of common Sense; and all Argument is lost upon him. It might be added, that the Loyalty of the Catholics in Edward the Sixth's Reign, and the beginning of Queen Elizabeth's, is a demonstration that this Writer's charge is false.

March 22, T. N. appears again. He attributes the same Principle to the Catholics with the heretic Free-thinker, but not the same attachment to it; for he says, the Principles of Prudence and Humanity in Queen Elizabeth's Time, determined the Majority of Catholics to prefer the good of their Country and their own safety, to their Obedience to the Pope.



A rational Enquiry into the secret Causes of the Continuance of Popery in these Kingdoms.

LETTER V.

Misrepresentations of Fact, invented and propagated by weak Protestants to bring an odium on Popery, has done infinite mischief to the Protestant Cause in these Nations. Generally speaking, it is exceeding difficult wholly to stifle the voice of truth, and when it comes to speak for the wronged and defenceless, it wins over mankind to their favour by an irresistible charm,

charm, and proportionably prejudices them against the Deceiver, and his Arguments.

Those who made vast Estates by the *Popish forfeitures* in Ireland, and those who were desirous of the continuance of that profitable commerce which raised Fortunes with less trouble or stock than a voyage to the Indies, found it their interest to impress the English Nation with the idea of *Irish Popish Massacres*, because the old Proprietors had no hopes of redress but from the *Justice and Integrity* of the English Nation. But tho' the Truth was for some Time clouded here, it was not irretrievably lost. The very ingenious and candid Author of the *Trial of the Roman Catholics*, who is himself a *Protestant*, and has too fair a title to Fame, to prostitute his Pen, hath unveiled it even to the people of England. But in Ireland, where it could not be hid from the Roman Catholics, what an indignation must it raise in their Breasts against the Protestants, and against the Religion of Protestants, when they were forced by those who came amongst them, in order to plant the Reformation, to the cruel alternative of perishing without Arms in their Hands, or suffering for Rebellion against a King, whom they pitied and would have saved if they could? 'Tis certain, as I observed, the Protestant Cause ought not to be affected by this behaviour of its worst Professors; and the Evils ought to be imputed to the Avarice, the Hypocrisy, and Treachery of the *Fanatics*, who went to Ireland at that Time; on the very Errand that brought the first Spaniards to Peru and Mexico. Yet as it is difficult to separate our Ideas of the Actions of Men, and of their Principles, the wrongs of various kinds suffered by the Catholics of Ireland, under the cloak of Religion, gave them originally an horrid Idea of the Reformation, which time can hardly obliterate. As for those who affect still to speak of the Popish Rebellion and Massacre in Ireland, I recommend to them, in tender consideration of the Protestant Cause, to make some enquiry into the Fact; to read so much of the *Trial of the Roman Catholics of Ireland* as relates to this affair; and to answer it to the satisfaction of Readers of Candour and Honesty, before they give Papists room to say, that this Calumny did

did not gain ground because Men were *deceived*, but because they were lost to the sentiment of Truth, and were resolved to stand by the Falshood in the very *Face of Conviction*.

The next *horrible Story*, that occurs in the black History of Popery in these Kingdoms, is the *Gunpowder-Plot*: horrible indeed! that was in a moment to destroy so many Persons, and those the sacred Persons of the Legislature. A few obscure and abandoned Papists, who were distressed in their circumstances, were at the *Tail* of it, without knowing the *Head*, or being ever able to unravel the *Clue* that led them on. And though this Plot comes down to us exceedingly obscure, yet to the Papists who were engaged in it, it was more obscure than to any body else, as appeared by their separate Examinations. When they came to die, they all acknowledged their *Guilt* publicly, and at the same time expressed the highest *Detestation* and *Repentance* for it, as men do for any atrocious villainy, undertaken against their consciences, when the time approaches of appearing before the Almighty Judge of human Actions. They did not defend the Plot, as people do who imagine they are engaged in a laudable Action; but looked on it with horror, and a most lively fear of Divine Justice. Their dying behaviour was indisputable evidence, that the Design they had engaged in was resolved upon *against Principle*, like other villainies into which men are allured by promises, and views of worldly advantages: and every man who reasons justly, and without prejudice, on their behaviour at leaving this World, ought to judge that they came into this horrid Plot *against* their religious Principles; and accordingly, that it flew in their Faces, like other crying sins, when they came to die. It is well known how the *Regicides* behaved at their deaths, and that they vindicated, and gloried in the murder of their King; and the dissolution of the Government. The reason of which was evidently, that however they might have temporized at the Restoration, their private principles always abetted that unparalleled murder: and the plain inference from the circumstances on both sides is, that the Fanatics rebelled, murdered the King and destroyed the Constitution

tution on Principle; but that the Papists, who were led into the Gunpowder-Plot, entered into it *against* their religious principle, which is notoriously passive obedience to the Constitution, in all mundane Affairs.

Men of ordinary sense will not be imposed upon by gross and flat contradiction. How is it possible to believe, that the Popish Principle is *slavery, passive obedience, and non-resistance*, and at the same time, that it is *rebellion, disobedience to the Government, resistance, and sedition*? Yet these utter inconsistencies, the Accusers of Popery are ready to swear to, and they modestly expect you to swallow them without hesitation. I shall, in the course of these Letters, have occasion to explicate the drift or end of charging Papists with these contradictory principles, in order to load their heads with execrations, and to devote them to sacrifice; but at present, let us consider only the effect. The *scarecrow* articles of accusation exhibited against Popery, which are *Mama's* part of the controversy, and are consigned to the tuition of the *Nursery*, serve only to bring discredit on all the arguments against Popery; and I am persuaded, nine conversions in ten to that religion, will be found owing to the detection of prejudices and deceptions, injudiciously inculcated at the mother's knee. When a Protestant youth of probity and undebauched morals, who has been taught to believe, that the Papists are a set of execrable wretches, and ready for every evil, finds in the course of his life or travels, that they are like other People, social, honest, faithful, loyal, and charitable, he will be apt to suspect the whole of his infant religious education, a plot against the truth, and to reject all together *.

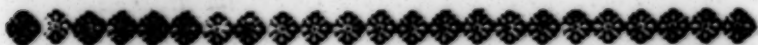
I am, &c.

A real FREETHINKER.

P. S. It may be judged, that I ought not to pass over wholly unnoticed, a Letter in your last Saturday's Paper,

* March 29, The Real Well-wisher to Reformation speaks to this Fifth Letter, but is very confused. He mentions the Executions in Mary's Days, and the Massacre of Paris,

Paper, signed *No Smotherer*. But as that Letter-writer has not thought proper to deny any *Principle* I laid down, nor any *Consequence* I drew from those Principles, I cannot think of taking up People's time in reading a Reply to what is No Answer. However, since he seems willing to disagree with me, as soon as I have finished my present Enquiry, I intend to give his Letter a full Answer.



The following three Letters were published in the Ledger, the first as late as May 24. the second June 14. and the third August the 2. The Author signs himself a Citizen of the World, but as they are a continuation of the subject of the last Letter, I have ventured to place them here for the sake of the connection.

SINCE the *real Freethinker* is resolved to quit the field, and plead no longer the Cause of sincerity and truth in the religious debate; against the last remains of barbarity and slavery in this philosophic and free Nation, I will take the liberty of stepping forward in support of one particular subject of his, which it is a pride, and pious duty of human nature to contend for.

A coarse Letter-writer in your Paper of April 19, who calls himself *No Smotherer*, charges the *real Freethinker* with notorious shuffling, and prevarication, about the *Gunpowder-Plot*, and *Irish Massacre*; facts, which, he says, were manifestly proved upon Papists, acknowledged and gloried in by many of them. When a distressed people are slandered and menaced for crimes, of which they are not guilty, Virtue itself calls upon every body without distinction, to speak the truth, and expose the wrong. These horrid charges are made professedly to justify the prosecution of Catholics, who have

Paris, in Terms that would make any body believe the Freethinker denied them, though in reality he writ nothing about them. He thinks the Persecutions and Rebel-lions of Catholics a Presumption, that they had the Sanction of the Church for both.

have no guilt but their Religion, to the humane and sincere, who would be offended at the oppression of their innocent fellow-creatures, if their revenge and anger were not thus artificially raised. If the charges be true, let them and the proofs be displayed to the world, that the danger of such a detestable society may appear with infamous lustre; and let monuments of lasting marble, at the foot of every bridge, tell them to the passing traveller. But if they be slanders, and a people who are Britons born, be chained down to endless injuries, by calumny and malice, it is justice to human nature, and to religion, to speak the truth boldly; for, as surely as if a regenerated child of Calvin had said it, *Truth is orthodox, and of divine Obligation.*

In the *real Free-thinker's* Letter, I find, he has neither denied the Gunpowder-plot, nor the amazing villainy of it: he only said, the Papists engaged therein were few, obscure, abandoned, distressed in their circumstances, and that they acted against their religious principles. If there be prevarication in supposing them to be few, obscure, abandoned, and uneasy in their private fortunes, the prevarication lay in the members of the Privy-Council, who examined the circumstances of the Plot, in the King, and in the Courts of Justice in which the criminals were tried; for upon the most severe and captious examination, only a very few Catholics were impeached, and a very few found guilty. and those men of the very character the *real Free-thinker* represented them; for King James the First, who knew best of any man, what had been discovered concerning the Plot, in his second proclamation, says, "Whereas Thomas Piercy, and some other confederates, being of lewd life, insolent dispositions, and for the most part of desperate estates." And in his proclamation of the seventh of November, 1605. "We are by good experience so well persuaded of the loyalty of diverse subjects of the Romish Religion, that they do as much abhor this detestable conspiracy as ourself." And now I insist, that the popular prejudices against Papists on account of this Plot, and the Historians who have echoed the popular prejudices, ought both to be corrected by the proofs that appeared to the Privy Council, to
the

the King, and to the Courts of Justice; for I would fain know, by what authority, Roman Catholics are found guilty, who are not convicted, or impeached, by the Tribunals where this Plot was examined.

It is undeniable, that there was then a numerous party of malevolent men who strenuously endeavoured to extend the guilt of those few necessitous loose miscreants, to the whole body of Roman Catholics of England, which would have produced a fine carnage, and fine forfeitures; that though these cruel and unjust men are long dead, their principles survive them; and that the present fanatic race, who once more ominously plead for reforming the Church of England, lest they should want of the guilt of their forefathers, appear angry, and cry out *Prewarication*, when a Writer pleads, that a people who did not appear, upon the most rigorous scrutiny, to have any connection with the conspirators, or knowledge of the Plot, should not be found guilty, and condemned promiscuously along with the criminals. And now, let generous Britons, who are moved at the wrongs of the most distant nations, reflect a little on this instance, this undeniable instance, of a fixed, settled purpose in a party, carried down from generation to generation, of confounding the innocent with the guilty, and of condemning Papists universally, against whom no proof ever appeared.

The *real Free-thinker*, finally inferred, from the dying behaviour of the Catholics who suffered for the Plot, that the Villainy they had engaged in, was undertaken manifestly against their religious principles, and opposed their dying behaviour to that of the Regicides, who rushed into the rebellion, and murdered the King on principle. I cannot here avoid taking notice of a pretty piece of flight of hand, performed on the *real Free-thinker's* Letter by the *real Well-wisher to Reformation*. The first asserted, that the few Papists in the Plot had engaged in it against their Religious principle, and he gave the most convincing proof imaginable of the truth of what he advanced: but the *real Well-wisher to Reformation*, in your Ledger of March 29. publishes in the face of the world, the very contrary, for the *real Free-thinker's* assertion; and says, he represents them as un-

informed,

informed, that such practices were disagreeable to the tenets of the Roman Church. If I could find a softer and more candid term for this misrepresentation than Forgery, I would use it; and only take notice of the prevarication, as an instance of the vast difficulty people of his stamp find, in speakingly honestly in their pleadings against Popery. Now let us pass on to the Irish Rebellion.

The little the *real Freethinker* said of the Irish Rebellion, he said after a Writer of genius and Character, Mr. Brooke. Let us consider then; how far Mr. Brooke is justifiable in his account of it. The Fanatics, who before and after the execution of the King, contended with the Papists of Ireland, and finally possessed themselves of immense Popish Estates, justified their procedure to the English nation, where they know their titles must be determined by a bloody tale of a Popish massacre. The season was exceeding favourable to them, for the kingdom was just run mad with Plots, and Massacres. A thousand extravagant calumnies were industriously circulated against Papists and against Protestants of the church of England, as Popishly affected and every calumny was believed like the Scriptures, inasmuch, that, as at this day, to contest the calumny, or to seek for truth, was the indubitable mark of a Papist. Now it must be allowed, that large estates and possessions were mighty temptations to the gentry who were the original authors of this bloody narration, to begin hostilities against the Papists who lay at their mercy, and then to tell a lie in their own justification, in order to make the unfortunate losers appear the aggressors. It is said Irish Papists are cruel, from the fact which is in dispute; but it is out of all dispute, that the Fanatics, who stood at the head of the Engine that played this dire history among the crowd, were the most slanderous Hypocrites, who ever brought infamy on the human race; and that under the pretext of the Gospel, they stopped at no crimes that led to worldly power and riches.

Let it be observed, that I draw no argument from their ravening dispositions, and Hypocrisy, but the mere possibility that the Fanatics in Ireland, possessed themselves

themselves of that kingdom with the same deceit and calumny, their brethren did of England; and that the same holy slanders and artifices were exercised against the Irish Papists, that were so successfully employed in Britain against the members of the established church. Nothing shall be allowed in evidence of their guilt, but the clearest, strongest proof.

Tho' the confederates against the Papists of Ireland were always desirous to conceal the truth, yet they were in circumstances that rendered it impossible. The Lords Justices were at the head of the confederacy; they made use of their power to bring about their ends; public dispatches and letters passed between them; public acts and records were necessarily made, and in these they discovered the truth, and have given a full and unexceptionable evidence against themselves, that they were the aggressors, and real authors of the calamities of the times; and that the Popish Massacre, was a forgery of their's in their own defence. With this face of things, the story of the Popish Massacre exactly tallies; for upon close examination, it bears various marks of incredibility, and imposture. Give me leave here to lay down a necessary and just maxim, in reading the history of the Irish Rebellion. It is, that a hundred Historians, from Clarendon, down to Hume, repeating the same transactions, after the original propagators of the Popish Massacre, add no credit to the relation which their original authors had not, that is, the Historian stands in the place of his Informer, whether the Informer be good or bad.

The honest Gentleman I had occasion to mention before, who calls himself, a real Well-wisher to Reformation, refers us to a little book, published in 1752, wrote by the worthy Walter Harris, Esq; who has unmasked Mr. Brooke, before Mr. Brooke wrote; but it would be no more than common candour in our Letter writer, to inform his Readers, that Mr. Harris's little book, is part of a controversy on this very subject; and that a reply was made to it in Ireland, in the year 1757, which was published in London last year, by several Book-sellers, by the title of *Historical Memoirs of the Irish Rebellion*, extracted from Parliamentary Journals,

nals, State Acts, and the most eminent Protestant Historians; with an Appendix, containing several authentic Papers relating to the Rebellion, in a Letter to Walter Harris, Esq; to which he never thought proper to answer, tho' his friends of the *good old cause* want his assistance greatly, or the assistance of some other *real Well-wisher* to it, to save them from the conviction of wronging a whole people of their estates and fame, and of plunging themselves into the further crimes of hypocrisy and calumny, to cover their unjust invasions.

Now the Irish Massacre, was not manifestly proved upon the Papists by the majority of the eye witnesses; for the Papists of Ireland were then nine out of ten of the inhabitants, and these Papists were always unanimous, that before the Rebellion they eagerly sought for the common security of subjects; that they took up their swords in the last despair, and not 'till they saw their Governors betray their King, as well as themselves. That Massacre was not proved manifestly upon them, by the very men, who were the original authors, and propagators of it; first, because they were parties, and evidence at the same time, and such parties as, before a Judge at common law, would not be admitted as fair Witnesses, seeing that their new acquired estates and fortunes depended on the Verdict. Secondly, because the unpremeditated evidence they gave against themselves, by their public acts and letters, prove that they were the real authors of the rebellion, and the inventors of the massacre, which, considered along with the plain marks of imposture that run thro' the history of it, has infinitely more weight, than the studied narrations they and their partizans made out to the public, and to the people of England, in their own defence.

Nor is the massacre manifestly proved by the historians who strictly followed the information they received; because, they certainly deserve no more credit than the original authors did, and these are contradicted by other writers, who from their situation, knew the matter much better; therefore it has hitherto been manifestly proved by nobody.

And

And now I call upon this Letter-writer publicly to prove his assertion by any one single testimony, better than himself, that the Papists ever acknowledged, or gloried in, the Powder-Plot, or in any cruelty committed in the Irish Rebellion. It is difficult to avoid observing the unconquerable fortitude, and obstinate enmity with which persons of the stamp I write against, resist the truth, and entrench themselves against the approaches of conviction, rather than want a Pretext for distressing and plaguing Papists,

I am, Sir,

Yours &c.

A CITIZEN of the WORLD.

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**F** W. in your Ledger of May, 31, has warmly called upon me, to specify one single Dispatch, Letter, Act of State, or Record, in which any Evidence appears, that the Lords Justices in the year 1641, were the aggressors and authors of the calamities of the times. Before I answer this soldierly challenge, I will take the liberty to state the case with him. It is nothing to this Gentleman's purpose to prove, that the Irish party, when they had taken up arms, were guilty of many cruelties and murders. These shocking deeds are always the effects of a civil war, in which the rude outrageous rabble are broke loose. It is as little to his purpose to shew, that the principal Catholics concerned, formed a conspiracy, and acted by combination. To prove those points is frivolous and pedantic, because no body ever disputed either of them. But the questions are, first, Whether the Lords Justices and their select friends, were the aggressors and authors of the civil war, by driving the Irish Catholics into despair, and leaving them no hopes of redress, or even safety, but in arms, after it appeared visibly that the Lords Justices were plotting against their King, as well as against themselves? Secondly, Whether there was such a massacre made by the Irish Papists, as was set forth in  
England

England by their accusers? Thirdly, Whether there were not more in number, of innocent inoffensive persons, murdered by the Puritan party, who acted under the direction of the Lords Justices, and of their particular friends, than were in the whole killed by the Popish party; and if they were not those barbarous murders that provoked the Popish party to the like acts of cruelty and revenge? Having fixed on these decisive points, I will proceed to answer his challenge; and first, I will produce his own evidences, the Lords Clanricard and Castlehaven, in support of the charge against the Lords Justices.

Extract of a letter from the Marquis of Clanricard to the King, January 22, 1641. "The first motives, and the increase of those distempers, are offered to be proved by the testimonies of several persons of worth and quality. — The late distempers in Scotland, the high proceedings in England, and the present commotions of this kingdom, suffered to grow to so great a height, by your Majesty's Ministers here, are matters far above my apprehension; passages stopped, and all men's tongues and pens so bound up from giving any right intelligence, that I walk in a strange darkness, &c."

Extract of another letter to the Duke of Richmond, January 23, 1641. "All generally discontented with those that manage the affairs of State here, whom they charge with secret practising, both here and in England, before the commotions began, to raise parties and factions, to destroy their Religion, to divert and hinder the King's graces, intended towards them, by that means to put them into desperation, that they might forfeit their lives and fortunes; and since the distempers began, that they (the Lords Justices) had so disposed of affairs, as if the design was laid to put the whole kingdom into rebellion." —

*Clanricard's Memoirs.*

Now let my Lord Castlehaven be heard, to shew, that the same machinations carefully guarded the first sparks of the Rebellion from being quenched, until it was blown into a general combustion. "Both houses of Parliament, the true representative of the Nation's  
C  
loyalty,

“ loyalty, unanimously declared their readiness to pro-  
 “ secute and suppress the Rebels ; and in order to bring  
 “ them speedily to condign punishment, having, with  
 “ all possible zeal and alacrity, offered their lives and  
 “ fortunes to the Lords Justices, they fell immediately  
 “ to consider of the most effectual means to do the  
 “ work. But this way of proceeding did not, it seems,  
 “ square with the Lords Justices designs, who were  
 “ often heard to say, that the more were in Rebellion,  
 “ the more lands should be forfeited to them ; and,  
 “ therefore, in the very heat of the business, they  
 “ resolved upon a prorogation ; which the Parliament  
 “ understanding, the Lord Viscount Costelloe and my-  
 “ self, were sent from the house of Lords, and others,  
 “ from the Commons to the Lords Justices, to desire the  
 “ continuance of the Parliament, until the Rebels, then  
 “ few in number, were reduced ; but our address was  
 “ slighted, and the Parliament next day prorogued, to  
 “ the great surprise of both houses, and the general dis-  
 “ like of all honest and knowing men.—But the greatest  
 “ discontent of all was about the Lords Justices pro-  
 “ roguing the Parliament, the only way the nation had  
 “ to express their loyalty, and to prevent their being  
 “ misrepresented to their Sovereign ; which, had it  
 “ been permitted to sit for any reasonable time, would,  
 “ in all likelihood, without any great charge or trou-  
 “ ble, have brought the rebels to justice.”—“ Although  
 “ his Majesty and both houses of the English Parlia-  
 “ ment had recommended it to them, to bestow his  
 “ Majesty’s most gracious pardon to all such without  
 “ distinction, as should within a convenient time, re-  
 “ turn to their obedience, yet these Lords Justices did,  
 “ by their proclamation, limit these his Majesty’s and  
 “ the Parliament of England’s favourable and gene-  
 “ ral intentions, to the inhabitants of a few counties  
 “ only, *Provided always, they were not freeholders :*  
 “ and allowed them but ten days to come in.” *Castle-*  
*haven’s Memoirs.*

These are the sentiments of the Lords Clanricard  
 and Castlehaven of the causes of that Rebellion, and of  
 its growth. Let us more particularly trace the con-  
 duct of the Lords Justices. This prorogation was a  
 public



public act of theirs; the limitation of the King's pardon to such circumstances as rendered it ineffectual, and a total exclusion of all those who had freeholds to lose; by which the men of property and interest were rendered desperate in rebellion, was a public act of the Lords Justices. The measures they took before the rebellion broke out, to frustrate the King's intentions of securing to the Irish the possession of their estates; the industry with which they circulated the design of introducing the Scotch covenanting army into Ireland, to extirpate the Natives; the public declarations of Parsons, that within a twelvemonth no Catholic should be seen in Ireland; the furious orders issued to their Party in arms, instead of publishing an amnesty and pardon, and the bloody behaviour of those who received their orders; which procedure, says the Earl of Castlehaven, "not only exasperated the Rebels, and induced them to commit the like cruelties to the English, but frightened the Nobility and Gentry round about; who seeing the harmless country people, without respect to age or sex, thus barbarously murdered, and themselves openly threatened, as favourers of the Rebellion, for paying the contributions they could not refuse, resolved to stand upon their guard." These were public acts of the Lords Justices, and very expressive of the guilt charged upon them, and upon their partizans, in their own days, by men of undoubted integrity and knowledge in the secret springs of the public transactions. That the opinion of the guilt of that Party gained ground, and was common even then, is witnessed by Borlace himself, one of those very Lords Justices; who asserts, "that the report that his Majesty's Protestant subjects first fell upon, and murdered the Roman Catholics, got credit and reputation, and was openly and frequently asserted." And, that it was the judgment of sincere honest Protestants, who made an enquiry, let Dr. Nalson, a Protestant historian, witness; his words are, "It is most evident, that the Lords Justices, Parsons and Borlace, did, by their authority, command many things, which did not only exasperate, but render the Irish desperate; as will appear by several of their own letters and public acts

“ of State ; and, that on the first irruption of the Rebellion, they had a greater eye to the forfeitures of the Rebels estates, than to use such means as might, by the hopes of pardon, induce the better sort of the Nobility and Gentry to hear reason, and to come in and submit themselves to his Majesty’s mercy, though they had express directions from the King, and the two houses of Parliament so to do.”

After these quotations, and instances of the conduct of the Lords Justices, it is needless to tell you, or my candid readers, that my sentiments of the Irish Rebellion are neither new, nor an imposition on the Public, nor the indubitable mark of a bigotted, fiery, false-hearted Papist. To brand every man who dares to write the truth with such a character, is a wretched shift to keep above water a sinking falsehood. Dr. Nalfon was no Papist, Mr. Brook is no Papist, but a Protestant, and an ardent, zealous advocate for Liberty, on the principles of truth and honour. The Lords Clanricard and Castlehaven were Papists, it is true, but they took up arms, and led troops of Papists on behalf of their King and the British constitution, while the British constitution remained in being. They fought for the shadow of royalty, when the sovereignty was no more in the King, when he was unable to give his subjects the protection of the Laws, or even to protect himself.

That the Massacre was not what it is represented in England, is admitted by F. W. the Letter-writer I am replying to, who thinks Peter Walth’s account pretty near the truth ; and it always will preponderate strongly with fair enquirers, in favour of the Irish Catholics, that they eagerly and repeatedly pressed to have a strict enquiry made into the murders on both sides, and that their adversaries solicited with equal attention against such an enquiry, or evaded it : accounting for which, Peter Walth says, “ There is no man of reason but  
 “ understands it was because the Irish nation, &c. were  
 “ not guilty of those barbarous and inhuman crimes,  
 “ notwithstanding any other guilt that might be justly  
 “ charged upon them ; and that those who denied  
 “ them so exorbitantly, found themselves, or those of  
 “ their party, more truly chargeable with more nume-

“ rous

" rous more barbarous, and inhuman crimes and murders, committed on the stage of Ireland."

The only part I have left effectually unanswered, is the letter writer's abuse and scurrility, which I leave him in full possession of, to adorn his own or his friend's new-born history : nor can I comprehend how abuse illustrates a man's reasoning, his candour, impartiality or good breeding. But if F. W. be himself the respectable Personage whom he introduces to the Public, as a Gentleman of character, now writing the history, he so cordially recommends, he need be under no apprehensions, that any thing I have said, or can say, will spoil the sale of his book, or convince readers of congenial parts, candour, impartiality and delicacy with himself. It may be of some service to the historian, and is not foreign to the purport of this letter, to offer a few reflections on the different plans an author may propose to himself in treating on this subject.

The first and general plan is to follow the most extravagant accusers and enemies of the Irish Papists, and of their faithful copiers, step by step, to murder their hundreds of thousands, to take the depositions of those honest eye-witnesses who were present and had seen the Protestant Proctor's body ripped up, and his entrails taken out without bleeding, until he was carried away ; who were present when the young woman's body became invulnerable to the rebel's sword : of those who have seen the ghosts of murdered Protestants at Portadown-bridge, and heard their cries for revenge on the Papists, which was most piously executed, agreeable to the commands of the dead. The depositions of those who swore to the murder of many Protestants who were alive several years after ; and of those who, being touched with remorse, recanted their depositions. I will not take upon me absolutely to decide whether it will be most prudent to retain those nice circumstances that were of vast use in the days of ghosts and witches, to establish and inflame the public prejudice, or since that end is effectually secured to hand, to garble the depositions, and lay entirely aside the miraculous and incredible parts, which are not so proper for this infidel age ; the conduct of a writer in this point must depend on the

class of readers he writes for. A history judiciously compiled on this plan, in which the Puritans shall be stiled his Majesty's faithful and loyal subjects, in which the charity and perseverance of those holy men to teach the Irish Papists their catechism, without the least view of worldly advantage or interest to themselves; and the horrid persecutions with which the blood-thirsty Papists received the mild and reverend missionaries, is strongly painted, will infallibly sell as a preservative against Popery, and as a *common-place*, very useful in writing a sermon, or an invective in the news-papers, against the *bigotted, fiery false-hearted Papists*.

A second plan is a refinement on the first; for all great designs are capable of improvement. Men's passions are grown cool, and Time, who is a great tale-bearer, has given the world some untoward hints. It may be, therefore, prudent to recede a little from the first plan; to reject the authorities that are eminently partial and false, and to chuse the materials out of more unexceptionable witnesses; but, then, out of those witnesses, to select all the cruelties, the murders and rapine of which the Papists were guilty, and make up such a picture of them as Hogarth did of Churchill; to paint strongly the hateful malignant passions, and suppress the noble and gentle sentiments; to take no notice of, or, at best, to pass lightly over, with an apology, the provocations they received, the enormities and treacheries of their enemies, or the fair instances of Justice, Virtue, Probity and Loyalty that spread among them, even through the course of this rebellion. And though an universal attention in the Lords Justices and in their select friends, to drive the Irish Catholics into despair and rebellion, so as to forfeit their estates, explains every difficulty, mystery, and public measure, through the course of those transactions, as exactly as a key answers to the wards of a lock, or the motions of the musicians fingers over the keys of an instrument, to the music; and though nothing else can account for the whole tenor of their behaviour, yet never to allow this design, while the human invention can find an evasion or retreat. An history on this cautious plan, in this penetrating sceptical age, may have its use; but like  
all



all cautious works it will be but indifferently liked by every party; and wanting the enthusiasm that attends upon inclination in a writer, it will probably fall into oblivion in its early and immature years.

The third is the track, in which conscious Merit pursues Fair Fame and Truth with an unfeigned passion. A writer who makes this honourable choice must, like Salust, repeat Cæsar's speech in behalf of Cataline's friends, though Cæsar be living, and grasps the thunders of this nether world; he must blend the beauties and blemishes, the vices and virtues, as they are in nature. If he takes up this great rebellion for a subject, he must give a distinct view of the human passions that acted through the interesting scene, and shew the parts of avarice, of malice, of virtue, of religion, of hope, and of despair. In the midst of the cruelties and terrible images the Irish left to be recorded in history, he will find some soft prospects to relieve the sight; and cannot fail of taking notice of those Catholic Noblemen and Catholic troops, who fought for the inveterate enemies of their nation and religion, and drew their swords to defend the very men who were resolved on their extirpation, because the name of royalty was on that side.

I am, &c.

*A CITIZEN of the WORLD*



**I**N my letter of May the 24th, I asserted, that the Puritans who possessed themselves of immense Popish estates in Ireland, justified their procedure to the English nation, where they knew their titles must be determined, by a forged Irish massacre, in order to make the unfortunate losers appear the aggressors. I also asserted, that the then Lords Justices of that kingdom, have left in their public acts, a full and unexceptionable evidence against themselves, that they were the aggressors, and real authors of the calamities of their times in Ireland.

F. W. in a violent passion, huddled up a letter, which I suppose he meant for an answer. It was inserted in  
your

your Ledger the Saturday following, and consisted of a challenge to specify the evidence I spoke of; a few scraps of quotations to prove the Irish did commit some massacre; a general leaven of illiberal abuse, and some warm encomiums on a certain Gentleman behind the curtain, now writing the history of the rebellion, whom modesty, I suppose, did not permit him to mention, but who will certainly appear next winter, with a valuable new book in his hand, for every body who pleases to buy it. In this letter he seems aggrieved, that the King's Ministers of State should be called parties and evidence at once, when they were no otherwise so, but as a Secretary of State is, who is collector and preparer of the evidence for the crown; and he determines the massacre at about eight thousand, agreeable, as he says, to Peter Walsh's computation.

The extravagant and inflaming account of the massacre published and re-echoed through England, was evidently what I called a forgery. The slaughter of the Protestants before they apprehended danger, was swelled to about forty or fifty thousand; and, within the two first months, to about one hundred and fifty thousand. The massacre was held up in general in England to some thing near these limits. *Baker*, who writ his chronicle with circumspection, and from the best informations, extends the number killed, within the first month, to two hundred thousand.

In my reply of June 14. I took notice, that it was trifling, and beside the question, to prove that the Irish when they took up arms, were guilty of many cruelties and murders, because no body denied it: that the question, in this case, is, whether there was such a massacre made by them, as had been set forth in England by their accusers: and indeed it is obvious that nothing else was, or could be charged to them as a forgery, but that story of which they had been the publishers. I observed that this letter-writer, by admitting Peter Walsh's account to be pretty near the truth, has acknowledged the forgery I charged them with. I must own at the same time, if the question had been, were the Irish guilty of any cruel massacre, the answer is, *they were*: and in proving this F. W. is pretty safe, because

because he is sure to have no antagonist; but if the question be, whether the account that passed through the hand of the Lords Justices and of the Puritans of Ireland since, be a forgery, the answer to be collected from F. W. is, *that it is an errant, unvarnished forgery*, since if you divide the charge into about twenty parts, nineteen of them are false. I let it rest upon his own representation at present, because that is sufficient to shew the insincerity and aggravation of the charge, and the shocking perfidy of the Lords Justices, who had it in their power, and ought to correct the monstrous exaggeration: for upon close enquiry I am persuaded it will be found, that if those killed in battles, sieges, and skirmishes between armed parties be excluded, the proportion the falshood holds to the truth, is more than one hundred and fifty to one.

Having settled this affair with F. W. upon his own terms, let us proceed to my next proposition, that the acts of the Lords Justices prove them the aggressors and authors of the calamities of Ireland in their times. The partial and unfair use F. W. made of some detached scraps of the Lords Clanricard's and Castlehaven's Memoirs, obliged me to shew that, notwithstanding they condemned some particular actions of the Irish Party, and the rebellion in general, yet they thought the Lords Justices guilty of practices that brought on the rebellion, and that increased it after. I quoted them also, as well as Dr. Nalson and Mr. Brooke, to demonstrate the virulence, the injustice and narrow principles of this letter-writer, in making the sentiments of these noblemen, to whom he allows sense and candour, and of Protestant writers of repute, to be the peculiar marks of a fiery, false-hearted Papist. I have before me another disagreeable instance of the insincerity I in general complain of. Speaking of the quotations from those noblemen, "They relate, says he, to the growth, and not to the cause of the rebellion." This misrepresentation obliges me to recite part of the Marquis of Clanricard's letter to the Duke of Richmond. "All, generally discontented with those that manage the affairs of state here, whom they charge with secret practising both here and in England, before  
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*“ the commotions began, to raise parties and factions to destroy their religion, to divert and hinder the King’s graces intended towards them, by that means to put them into desperation, that they might forfeit their lives and fortunes.”* How can a person contend with such a writer, who cannot be trusted with a public print from one Saturday to another ?

When I had laid before the public the Sentiments of those Lords concerning both the cause and growth of the rebellion, I proceeded to the proper acts of the Lords Justices. F. W. acknowledges that they were highly culpable, that he himself could heighten those acts considerably, but says, they are after the massacre, and, on that account, signify nothing to my purpose. But in this assertion I will also demonstrate, that he is mistaken: let me observe as I pass along, that by acknowledging these culpable acts of theirs, he must also allow them, although the King’s ministers, to be very treacherous collectors and preparers of the evidence against the Irish, and that the testimony against them, of which these gentlemen had the cookery, deserves only the credit due to mortal enemies.

I must here own to my antagonist, that these Lords Justices, previous to the rebellion, did not publish by proclamation their design of driving the Irish into rebellion, in order to the forfeiting of their estates: such declarations of men’s selfish and sinister views are seldom made. Yet it is certain, that the tenor and scope of men’s actions are generally very good testimony of their designs, prior to those actions; and although they be not considered as strict demonstrations, yet they are often such moral evidence as leave no sort of doubt behind, especially in cases, where people take care to hide their designs as much as possible and discover them only in the execution. And indeed, if the Lords Justices could be supposed well meaning men at the beginning of the rebellion, who did not exasperate matters, and as Lord Clanricard says, practise here and in England to put the Irish into desperation, the whole course of their conduct after is such an opposition thereto, as in drawing of characters would discredit a writer of Romances or a Poet. But it is not only on the fairest rules of criticism



ticism, and the licence common sense grants to historians, and even to judges that I depend ; a close examination of some of the acts I produced, will clearly prove those gentlemen the aggressors, and authors of the calamities of that kingdom in their days.

The rebellion first broke out in Ulster, as the Lords Justices informed the Lord Lieutenant then in England. The Parliament of Ireland just then assembled, made an offer of their fortunes, and of every other means in their power to reduce it in its infancy, but the Lords Justices, when they found the Parliament eager to quell it, prorogued them in an arbitrary manner, and then, by those arts I mentioned, took very particular care to spread it over the kingdom, and, as Lord Castlehaven says, frightened the nobility and gentry round about, who seeing the harmless country people, without respect to age or sex, barbarously murdered, and themselves openly threatened as favourers of the rebellion, for paying the contributions they could not refuse, resolved to stand upon their guard, or, as Lord Clarendon expresses the same thing, others (of the Irish) " were by the passion and rigour of those who were " then in authority, and had power enough to destroy " whom they had inclination enough to suspect or accuse, driven to put themselves under the protection " of those whose ways and courses they totally disapproved." Now however guiltless we may suppose the Lords Justices of kindling the first flames of rebellion, surely those ill fated men, whom they drove to the necessity of embarking in the rebellion in their own defence, might justly charge them to be the aggressors, and the authors of their calamities ; and they may as truly be called the authors of the rebellion in these parts, where they industriously spread it, as a man may be called an incendiary, who finding some sticks on fire in a corner, throws the water ready to quench it out of doors, heaps it with all the combustibles within his reach, and spreads the flames till they have seized the whole house.

There is a point of time in this rebellion after which they are answerable for every calamity, and every act of cruelty that happened on both sides, that is, from the  
the

the time they received the king's orders to grant a general pardon to such as should, within a limited time, return to their obedience. The Irish nobility and gentry, in arms, strenuously besought to come in under the security of that protection; but instead thereof, the Lords Justices published an amnesty, limited to such circumstances, as must render it ineffectual, and which chained down to the rebellion every man who had a freehold to lose: that is, every man of interest and power. Thus having drove the men of property to take up arms, they after obliged them to hold those arms in their hands for their lives, and this necessity, first and last, is a fair and sufficient justification of charging the Lords Justices as the aggressors, and authors of the calamities of the times over the greatest part of the kingdom. But it will not rest here. I will, with the same plainness, shew, that they were equally guilty of kindling the first and original sparks of the rebellion, as of blowing them assiduously into an universal conflagration, and taking care they should not be extinguished without forfeitures.

It is necessary to have some acquaintance with the circumstance and situation of men, in order to have a just idea of what affects them, and of the spirit of their actions. The Catholics of Ireland had been a long time cruelly galled in point of conscience; they were at times severely fined by a standing law, for not attending on the Protestant service, though they, for the most part, understood not the language in which it was read, nor the objections of Protestants to Popery. Their Clergy were prosecuted with the utmost rigour. Their chapels seized, and the Popish Magistrates were in many instances punished, for neglecting to put the laws in force against their own community and Clergy. These spiritual grievances were continued with some intermission, at the will and discretion of the chief Governors; but they left terror and impatience always behind in the breast: at the same time there was a plan formed and executed to rob them of their estates, under the colour of an inquisition for the recovery of defective titles, in a country where Patriarchal possession was the general title, and where such as had been obtained were mostly destroyed

destroyed in the civil wars, and in the frequent incurfions of opposite parties, to which the kingdom had been liable for ages before. The enormity of the inquisition for the recovery of defective titles, gave the Irish hopes that it would be remitted in England, on proper representations; they made those representations: the King listened to them, and agreed to give the Irish agents satisfaction. When his intentions were signified to the Lords Justices and Council in Ireland, they drew up two acts in form, for determining and settling the Irish titles. The King agreed to those acts, and sent them back, with his approbation, to be passed into laws in the Parliament of Ireland. But the King's power and authority declining about this time very rapidly, when the Lords Justices found that those acts for settling the Irish in their estates, were on their way to Ireland to be passed into laws, they adjourned the Parliament for three months, in opposition to the eager supplications of both houses, and in violation of their duty to the King; for it is to be observed, that the King, by his Letter of March 28, before, had ordered, that the Parliament of that kingdom should sit until he should think fit to determine the same.

The minds of men, guarded by strict religious principles of duty and piety, will bear a great deal before they venture to break through those awful bands: but human nature hath its limits, beyond which it cannot be strained; and there is a point when patience gives way to despair; that point was now arrived; the disobedience of the Lords Justices to the King, the determined evil designs of those gentlemen against the Irish, their connection with the Puritan party in the English Parliament, the rising power of that party, and their stern aspect to the Irish Catholics, were all united in this measure, and struck the Irish with the most terrible apprehensions. A passage quoted before me from the History of Independency, wrote by an avowed enemy to the Irish, may serve to shew the expectations they had to form from the rising powers in England. "The Independents (in the English Parliament) insisted openly upon it, to have the Papists of Ireland routed out, and their lands sold to adventurers, and passing  
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“ an act of Parliament to that purpose, necessitated the  
 “ Irish to murder the English Protestants, which was  
 “ purposely done by the Independents, that both Pa-  
 “ pists and Protestants might destroy one another there.”  
 The Irish were aware of the enmity of this iron-heart-  
 ed race, and of their sanguine dispositions; a parti-  
 cular venom appeared in all their declarations and man-  
 ners; and Sir William Parsons, one of the Lords Jus-  
 tices, known to be connected with them, declared pub-  
 licly, that in a twelvemonth no Catholic should be seen  
 in Ireland. At the same time there were private solici-  
 tations on foot through the kingdom, for subscriptions  
 and petitions for a severe persecution against Papists;  
 though not so private as to remain wholly undiscovered  
 by the Catholics, but the darkness of the rumours in-  
 creased the terror. The Papists chafed and aggrieved  
 before, when they lost all views of security struggled  
 no longer: their patience was worn out with their  
 hopes; the last steps of the Lords Justices overfilled a  
 measure full before, despair took place; like hunted deer  
 they turned about; and self defence put arms into their  
 hands. No man in his senses can pretend to say, the  
 Lords Justices were not apprized of the heart-burnings;  
 this prorogation must occasion to the Irish, whole  
 hopes and fears were wound up to such a pitch. They  
 had seen their souls in the eager supplications of both  
 houses to continue sitting, till the King's gracious inten-  
 tions were passed into laws; but they knew the impres-  
 sions, the unceasing declarations of deadly wrath against  
 Popery, that issued from the Scotch and English Parlia-  
 ments, made upon the Irish, who looked upon them-  
 selves as victims reserved for their fatal turn.

I cannot conceive what tempted F. W. to say, the  
 facts produced by me were after the massacre. This  
 prorogation of their parliament, which dashed to the  
 ground the hopes and security of the Irish, and which,  
 in effect, put their future fate upon the issue of things  
 in England, happened the August before the rebellion  
 broke out. Among the acts I mentioned, I insisted ex-  
 pressly on the measures they (the Lords Justices) took  
 before the rebellion broke out, to frustrate the King's  
 intentions of securing to the Irish the possession of their  
 estates.



estates. I also mentioned the industry with which they circulated the intention of introducing the Scotch covenanting army into Ireland, to extirpate the natives, and the public declaration of Parsons. Those were most effectual measures to incite the Irish in these circumstances to despair and rebellion; and they throw light forward on the following facts of the Lords Justices, with which they have as perfect consistency and unity of design, as the sowing of the seed has with the reaping of a field of corn. To allow the Lords Justices to be culpable, and designing in their conduct after the rebellion broke out, and to deny them to be so in their measures before it, is to confound and destroy all rules of moral judgment, and the most useful part of human knowledge. But whether they acted precedent to the rebellion, as Atheists say this world was formed, without purpose or intention, tho' there appears an exceeding regularity and consent of means all tending to the same end, yet those accidental measures had nevertheless their natural effects, to throw the Irish into despair and rebellion.

It would be an affront to the common sense of your readers, and indeed impertinent in me, while the two letters of F. W. lye before the Public, to make any observations on what we may expect from his degree of veracity, candour, good sense, and impartiality. He has left us in no doubt on these heads, and has given us such specimens as make it impossible to mistake him; *Ex pede Herculem*. It is a plain case, that if I be an impudent fiery false-hearted Papist, for daring to say what those Popish Noblemen writ, who led troops of Papists against their Popish countrymen for the English constitution, and for a Protestant King, and for repeating what Protestant writers of singular credit have published to the world, in defence of the Irish Papists; if I deserve no candour for appealing to the acts of their mortal enemies, in behalf of those Irish Papists, surely they themselves deserve no candour whatsoever, and it is absurd to expect this angry gentleman will treat them with any.

I am Sir, &c.

A CITIZEN of the WORLD.

A

*A rational Enquiry into the secret Causes of the Continuance of Popery in these Kingdoms.*

LETTER VI.

**L**ET us cast a veil over *Oats's Plot*, and leave it to oblivion ; with a wish, that villainy may never in like manner abuse the credulity, the weakness, and misery of human nature ; nor have the same power to shed innocent blood. I just mention it because it certainly had its effect, in giving Papists an ill idea of the Reformation. However, they reasoned unjustly, since the evils of that turbulent season were by no means the effects of the principles of Protestants, but of credulity, jealousy, and prejudice ; which are hereditary weaknesses of the mind of man. To the same account ought to be placed the charge on the Monument, that

—— pointing to the skies,  
*Like some tall bully, lifts the head and lies.*

POPE.

It is certain, when the Committee came to examine the whole affair of the Burning of London, that every presumption against the Papists on that account vanished, when they came to be strictly discussed. It is also certain, that eight Oliverian Fanatics, *Rathbone, Saunders, Tucker, Flint, Evans, Miles, Westcote and Cole*, were executed the April before for a plot, in which, amongst other articles, they concerted to set the City of London on Fire, about the very time it was burned. The plot was fully proved, and the criminals confessed it at their deaths : at the same time, they announced that the City should be actually burned, notwithstanding they suffered. However, the Column, by the help of a Stone-cutter, is brought in as good evidence against the Papists ; and stands up to bear witness, from generation to generation, that Prejudice and Party-rage were the frailties of our forefathers as well as of ourselves.

When

When a Clergyman of the Church of England, in a Sermon on the Fire of London, the Powder-plot, or Irish Rebellion, has ranged in display all the enormities that he can recollect to have been perpetrated by Papists; when he has charged them all to their religious principles, without placing any part to the account of human passions, or human corruption; when he has amplified and aggravated them, agreeable to the Rules of Rhetoric, so as to inspire his audience with sufficient malice, revenge and enmity, against the ill-fated Papist who lies at their mercy; when he has seared the hearts of his congregation to every sentiment of Humanity and Christianity, he thinks he has done his duty, and behaved manfully against Error and Popery. If I be asked, what other method could he substitute so effectual? I answer, that of Christianity. Has Truth, has Reason, has the Gospel, lost their wonted powers of conviction? Or will a life fraught with religion, with sanctity of Manners, and strict Virtue, have no effect? These were the arms by which the Apostles and their Followers subdued mankind to Christianity.

It confirms Papists mightily in the good opinion they have of their own arguments in defence of the authority of the Church, when they see Protestant Divines fly for shelter to *them* in their disputes with Dissenters, Socinians, Arians, and Deists. "I see you (says the Papist to the Church-of-England-man) supporting the Institution of Bishops, your Convocations or Synods, your national Articles of Faith, the Change of the Lord's Day, the Doctrine of the Trinity, the Lawfulness of eating Blood, &c. with my arguments of Tradition and Church Authority. These arguments were certainly good and conclusive in my mouth, to whom they really belong, or they are not good now at second hand in your mouth, against Infidels or Dissenters."

I recommend it strenuously to all Protestants who draw their pens in the zeal of their hearts against Popery, unless they have had a good trial of their own abilities, to learn to demonstrate a few propositions in Euclid, that they may acquire an habit of reasoning justly, and of discerning clearly when their arguments conclude,

conclude, or how far they conclude. Is it not provoking to hear men insult the ignorance of Popish Priests, and in the same breath complain, that they propagate their Religion against the united powers of Learning, Eloquence, and all the sanctions of Government, fixing thus the plainest mark of truth and christianity on Popery? What a wretched answer is it, to a person who reasons against Persecution, whether through Principle, Humanity, or Policy, to call him a Papist, and think that an answer sufficient to his objections; as if (supposing the random charge to be true) Reason and Veracity on the Popish side ought not to be attended to, and Falshood from a Protestant pen became sanctified. It is, I own, a cheap way of answering a Papist, to have an Act of Parliament that every thing said or writ by him should be of no force or consideration: but I question, after all, if such an Act would be satisfactory to an honest By-stander, and if the very opposite conduct would not satisfy him, and serve every purpose best, viz. to answer the Popish Reasoner with candour and precision, for that very reason, because he is a Papist.

When that great Casuist, Mr. *Anonymous*, is willing to prove some odious Tenet, or some odious Action incontestibly on the Papists, he lets his Readers into a secret Conversation he had once upon a time, with one of the most sober, rational Papists he ever knew, who acknowledged the whole secret to him; or he tells you a very true story, he heard from a man of great credit, who had it from a certain Nobleman, who travelled through the Pope's dominions; or he gives you word for word, the Exclamation of a certain Lady in Portugal against her Confessor, made in the presence of the Lord knows whom, in a prison where she never was. Those illiberal artifices and shifts are easily seen through, and when they are, they only help to hurt and expose the Cause in whose Favour they are called in.

The last article I shall mention of ill conduct on the side of Protestants, is the vein of malevolence and abuse, that too often sullies some of their controversial writings against Papists. The genuine characteristics of true Christianity are Candour, Meekness, and tender



der Charity ; and this is so well known amongst Christians, that it is far easier to persuade them, that Religion is all a cheat, than to make them believe. that Abuse, Scurrility, and Wrath, proceed from genuine Christianity and Benevolence \*.

I am, &c.

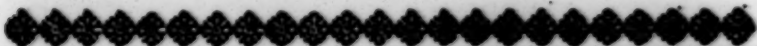
A Real FREETHINKER.

\* April 5, The real Well-wisher to Reformation begins his Letter by attacking a Passage in the Freethinker's Sixth Letter. The Passage begins with these Words, " It confirms the Papists mightily in the good opinion they have of their own Arguments, in Defence of the Authority of the Church, &c." This Letter writer very adroitly slipped over the strongest part of the Argument, that is. what relates to Infidels and Socinians, and limits himself to censuring those who make use of Church Authority and Tradition against Dissenters ; though it behoves Dissenters, and Church of England equally, to defend themselves against Infidels and Socinians, so that he has left the Freethinker's Argument in full Force against both, in their Conflicts with their unbelieving Adversaries ; and left them to their old shift of returning to Tradition and Church Authority, to establish their Convocations, their Articles of Faith, the Change of the Lord's Day, the Doctrine of the Trinity, and the Lawfulness of eating of Blood ; or to sink under the Objections of those who cannot find the Doctrines I mentioned established in Scripture, no more than they find Purgatory. Prayers for the Dead, or Confession ; and for that orthodox Reason, refuse to believe them

He then with nearly the same Slight and Dexterity, attempts to obviate the next Objection. The Freethinker takes notice of the Absurdity of those who insult the Ignorance of Popish Priests. and in the same Breath complain that they propagate their Religion, against the united Powers of Learning, Eloquence, and all the Sanctions of Government, fixing thus the plainest Mark of Truth and Christianity on Popery. To take away the Force of this Objection, he instances the superior Ignorance and Success of Methodists. But he should have considered, 1<sup>st</sup>.  
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That they are Protestants, and have not the Sanction of Government against them, as the Papists have. 2. That nothing in the main could be stronger urged for Popery; seeing that if the Methodists understand the Scriptures in a wrong Sense, then their appeal to the Bible does not, as he says, prove they have Truth or Christianity, but that they are unfortunately directed.

A Friend to Mankind in the same Paper, attributes the Growth of Popery to the dissoluteness of Manners, and contempt of the Bible amongst Protestants; to the subtle obicane of Priests amongst the low and vulgar; and to their Publications, &c. amongst those who should know better. That is, in short, to their Attempts to convince the Reason of Men, and to bring them to an Enquiry and Examination. He thinks Popery, though it has, he says, made some Advances, has not increased in Proportion to the Fears of Men about it. He is offended that the Free-thinker, amongst other Things, should attempt to disprove the Parisian and Piedmont Massacre, and the Spanish Armada, though that Writer had not made the least mention of any of them. And he concludes with what he calls a true Copy of an Abjuration of the Protestant Religion.



*A rational Enquiry into the secret Causes of the Continuance of Popery in these Kingdoms.*

## LETTER VII.

**I**N enumerating the various advantages that have been given to the Papists by the indiscreet methods made use of to overthrow them, I should be very deficient in my Catalogue, if I did not take notice of the no less ludicrous than unsuccessful attempts to prove the Pope to be Antichrist. This is a standing jest among Papists, and gives them an opportunity of retorting upon Protestants, that they are the false Prophets, foretold in the Scripture, to come in the latter days.

In the times of Protestant Bigotry and Darkeness (for there have been dark ages of Protestantism as well as Popery) when the railing in of the Communion Table was look'd upon as erecting an Altar to the Pope; when  
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an Organ in a Church was esteemed no better than the Devil's Bag-pipes, and a decent Surplice was thought a foul Remnant of the Whore of Babylon, and a filthy Rag of Rome; I say, when many Protestants were so little enlightened as to talk at this rate, 'tis not to be wondered at, that proving the Pope to be Antichrist, was looked upon as one of the first rate Arguments against the Roman Catholics; but in these Sceptical Days, when Men seem rather inclined to dispute demonstrable Truths, than to admit ill-supported Chimæras, to make use of such inconclusive Arguments, is the surest way to betray the Cause of Protestantism, and the Papist desires no better Sport, than to have such childish Antagonists to deal with.

Suppose a Theist was to prove the Being of a God by the Doctrine of an Innate Idea, or a Christian the Truth of Revelation, by the internal Witness of the Spirit, as the Quaker does; can it be imagined that such a wretched method of arguing, however well intended, would not rather confirm the Atheist and Infidel in their impious opinions, than tend in the least to convince them of their error? What success, then, can be expected against Papists, by arguments equally vague and desultory, but a mean opinion of the Cause which makes use of such Arguments, and a contempt for others, which have really more weight? Every man, then, that wishes well to the Protestant Cause, ought to be very careful of employing such Arguments as these; which, though they may serve as a Tnb to the Whale, a Bauble for the Vulgar to play with, will always be looked upon with great reserve by the more candid and sensible; and accordingly we find some of the moderate and learned Clergy, in the time of James the First, reproached by the zealous Puritans, for teaching that *the Pope is not Antichrist*: but 'twould certainly have been more to the credit of Protestants, if all could have been thus reproached, rather than that so many of them should have exposed themselves to the reproaches of the Papists, by making all Posterity Witnesses of their Confutation and Disgrace.

To give a few instances of the unfortunate Soothsayers, who have been confuted by the unerring decision

sion of time.—The famous Brightman makes the fall of Rome and Destruction of the Pope to happen in 1546: Mr. Durham in 1559, Mr. Cotton, Mr. Mede, and Mr. Tillinghast in 1656, Mr. Symonds in 1695, Mr Burroughs makes it fall within 1760, and the famous Martyrologist, John Fox, says, after long Study and Prayer, it was cast suddenly into his Mind by Divine Inspiration, that the *forty-two Months*, must be referred to the Church's Persecution under the Roman Emperors, reckoning from John the Baptist; which Exposition, says a Protestant Author, may be received (*cum grano salis*) as a *fair Gloss* upon the place; though he owns Fox's Computation did not reach beyond the year 1666. But whether this Protestant Author's Gloss upon John Fox is a *fair* or a *soul* one, I leave the Public to judge.

'Tis strange, the experience of so many miscarriages should not have taught many modern learned Protestants more wisdom, than to beat their brains out against the almost impenetrable mysteries of the Apocalypses, in order to make out, that every one in the catalogue of Roman Bishops, for more than these last thousand years, is the very man of Sin, the very Anti-Christ prophesied of in the Old and New Testament. How much more worthy their calling it would have been, to have treated these arguments with the contempt they deserve; and with the more moderate and learned Protestants to have attacked the Papists in their trenches! These Champions understood where their own strength and weakness lay, as well as the Roman Catholics, and fought the Protestant's Cause, not with the Scare-crow weapons of Massacres, Plots, Pope Joan, and calling the Bishop of Rome the Whore of Babylon, but by appealing to Reason, Scripture, and primitive Tradition. How superior were these Heroes of the Reformation to the Cabbalistical Protestants, who have wreck'd the Hebdomadal number of Daniel, and the number of the Beast in the Revelations, to make them confess the Pope to be Antichrist, that 'tis the duty of every man, who has a love for the oracles of God, to endeavour to rescue them from the hands of such Interpreters, who have not only rendered themselves ridiculous to Papists, but



but have exposed those inscrutable mysteries of the Word of God to the laughter of Infidels!

It would be foreign to my intention, as well as inconsistent with the Brevity of a Letter, to enter into the merits of the arguments on both sides the question; 'tis sufficient for the proof of my general point, that asserting the Pope to be Antichrist; and Christian Rome, Babylon, is the occasion of great scandal; and has tended to confirm Papists in their Religion, by observing so many learned Protestants such bad Calculators, not to say Deceivers and false Prophets.

But however clear and positive these Christian Rabbins may be in this their interpretation of the Revelations, some of the most grave and learned Protestants, at the beginning of the Reformation, were quite blind to this evident conformity between the Pope of Rome and Whore of Babylon, and thought either that Antichrist was not yet come, or that the Turk was he. Of this opinion were Melancthon, Bullinger, Zanchius, Wicelius, Bucer, and Franciscus Lambertus. Some ingenious Protestants have indeed found out another, and much shorter, way of proving this grand thesis; and that is by a kind of Divination, by letters and figures; pretending to find in the numeral Letters of 666, the number of the Beast, the whole Mystery of Iniquity unfolded; but, unfortunately for these Gentlemen. their scheme proves too much; for not only Lewis the XIVth is proved to be Antichrist by this argument, but Martin Luther himself. But a bare repetition of these trifles, is a sufficient confutation of them; and therefore, for fear of entering into insignificant particulars, and disgusting your more liberal and ingenuous Readers, I shall conclude \*.

Yours, &c.

A Real FREETHINKER.

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\* The real Well-wisher to Reformation, who is a Hero in his way, and is not discouraged in the most desperate Circumstances, in attacking the 7th Letter in the Ledger of April 12, passes his word to the public that the Writer is a Popish Ecclesiastic; which is a voluntary  
Falsehood

*Falshood, because he did not know ; but even as a Guess, is certainly a Mistake. As a proof of his Candour, he freely acknowledges the Mistakes and Contradictions of several particular Protestants ; as if Contradictions were not the Distinctions of all the reformed Churches amongst themselves. But he says these Mistakes and Contradictions, are the natural and unavoidable Consequences of a free Study of the Scriptures, which is but a harsh unpromising Recommendation of the Study of the Scriptures, which, he ought to say, direct men clearly to the Doctrines of Salvation. He observes, that Joachim Stegman, a Socinian, is beforehand with the real Freethinker, in remarking the Variations of particular Protestant Writers, and the insufficiency of some of their Arguments against Popery, as if the real Freethinker's Complaint was for Variations and Insufficiency, and not for Calumny and Slander.*

*He afterwards attempts to prove the Pope to be Antichrist, from the unanimity of those Writers who teach that he is so. How he came to admit the Argument of Unanimity, and such a poor forlorn Unanimity as this, is unaccountable. They were mistaken, he says, only in calculating the Time of his Appearance, as the Jews were in calculating the Time of the Appearance of the Messiah ; but these Mistakes did not detract any thing from the Propriety of the Description given by the Prophets of the real Messiah. Let us now lay those Parallels together, and see how the Jewish Interpretation in the one Case, supports the Protestant Interpretation in the other. It is certain, that the Jews were not at all mistaken in calculating the Time of the Appearance of our Saviour, but in the Application of the Description given by the Prophets. No two things imaginable could be more different, than their Interpretation, and the genuine Character of our Saviour. So that this positive Gentleman has produced a very unfortunate Instance of the Applications men make of the prophetic Characters. He afterwards packs together the Defenders of the Church of England in King James the First's Time, with the Bishop of Meaux, and the other Catholic Champions ; and jumbles Altars, Organs, and Surplices, with Incense, Images, Relics, and Holy-water.*

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*In the same Paper, No Smotherer gives us a Letter written by Bishop Bedell, and printed at the End of his Life written by Burnet; in which, by way of Argument, he informs a Convert to the Church of Rome, of a Discovery he made in Venice, that the Pope is Antichrist, by means of the Inscription of a Thesis he had seen there. The Inscription contained these mysterious Words and Letters; PAULO V. VICE. DEO. which makes up exactly the Number 666, the number of the Beast.*



*A rational Enquiry into the secret Causes of the Continuance of Popery in these Kingdoms.*

### LETTER VIII.

**I** Come now to conclude this little Philosophic Enquiry. The indirect opposition it has met with, and the coy distance those who have taken upon them to write against it, have hitherto thought proper to keep from the main scope and object of it, obliges me to make a short Recapitulation, and to bring the whole within a distinct view, that nobody of candour may misapprehend the Proposition I attempt to establish.

It is well known to all attentive Readers of English History, that there have been repeated complaints of the *Growth of Popery* since the beginning of Queen Elizabeth's reign; that is, from an *Epocha*. when three-fourths, at least, of all the people in the kingdom were Papists. If we give this information credit, or even believe, that Popery hath kept its ground at any time since, in such case there arises a very curious, and important question to all Protestants, viz. By what strange means have error, absurdity, and ignorance, even while they laboured under several discouragements and disadvantages of Government, been enabled to prevail against learning, eloquence, reason, truth, and the gospel? It is certain, that the Writers of Romance never ventured to bring their little Knights into more unequal combats, or to make them cut down huge giants, at a rate more improbable. However, if Popery hath prevailed, it is indisputably the Interest of Protestants to

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become acquainted with the secret means of its success, in order to oppose and prevent it effectually.

As no arts can render falsehood a match for truth, or absurdity for reason, when truth and reason are equally well defended, it must be clear to every Protestant, that no Popish arts can possibly make up the defect, unless there be some mismanagement on the Protestant side, that renders abortive the all-powerful efforts of truth and reason: and from a sense of the powers on both sides, he can have no doubt but his own advantages judiciously made use of, must inevitably overwhelm Popery.

This reflection led me to consider the general plan in these nations for restraining Popery; and the first observation that meets us is, that the prevalence of truth and reason, the light of the gospel, and the preaching of the Clergy, are not the principal means employed to prevent the growth of Popery. I no where even suggested, that they are not made any use of; I only say, that the professed reliance of men to prevent the growth of Popery, is on the strength and weight of the secular arm. Whether this plan of operation against Popery be necessary or no, when the strength and weakness on both sides, are considered, is an enquiry I have not meddled with. I only made the following simple and general inferences from the conduct of Protestants, that when the evidence of truth and reason are little depended on, and people publicly appeal to the evidence of pains and penalties, they yield a strong presumption of the weakness of their cause, and naturally bring a suspicion on it; that it is difficult to persuade men who have an idea of Christianity or reason, that informers and Constables, in preference to the Clergy, are the proper instruments of converting men from error; or of propagating christianity; or that persecution is consistent with the Liberty of Conscience. Consequently, that this plan is badly calculated for persuading Papists of the truth of the Protestant Religion, and that it naturally disgusts honest Protestants, who expect great matters from the force of truth, and the light of the gospel.

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I also, in this enquiry, could not avoid observing several other measures that enter into the common conduct of Protestants against Popery, which obviously give up to Popery the appearance of distressed, slandered, persecuted truth; and at the same time, affix on the Protestants, who use them, an appearance of the spirit of persecution against principle, of calumny and malevolence. This conduct I alledge to be cause sufficient to prejudice several of the croud in favour of Popery, especially those who judge from appearances only, and therefore my enquiry ends here, since the conduct of Protestants, which I have run over, very sufficiently accounts for the continuance of Popery. It is also apparent, that the Popish Clergy have no necessity of much eloquence or address, seeing that a very little reading or penetration in the laity, will serve to expose notorious misrepresentation; and that men have no need of being informed, that calumny and persecution for conscience sake, in people who profess Liberty of Conscience, carry with them a very unpromising aspect.

If any other Explication proportioned to the Effect can be given, I shall willingly acquiesce in it. When I entered upon this Enquiry into the secret Causes of the prevalence of Popery against such mighty odds, I requested and hoped the assistance of the Public. Some Protestants came into the Debate, but however ready and eager they appeared to affirm the *Effect*, that is, the Growth of Popery under such enormous Disadvantages, they appear altogether as shy and bashful in producing the *Cause* into Light, and, with wonderful Dexterity, slip on every side of this plain and important Question; what latent Power is that, which, by the Success attributed to Popery, is acknowledged to be superior to the Force of Truth, of Reason, and of the Gospel, and which can make men prefer oppression and Contempt to sacred Liberty, and to the various advantages the Government holds out to Protestants?

I must acknowledge, that to this Enquiry a general and indefinite Answer, that evades all particulars, may be given, by alledging the Assiduity and Arts of the Popish Priesthood; which is a sufficient answer, enough for all those who require no ideas to reason upon, and

who are satisfied with words that have no determinate Meaning ; but a troublesome Freethinker, who makes his own Reflection, and will not be put off with bare sounds, comes and asks, whether those Arts of Popish Priests, are any other than Arguments that convince Men, who have the Reason God was pleased to give them ? Then returns the Question again with all its difficulties ; what are those particular Arts of Persuasion, let them be specified, by which Papists bewitch Folks out of their senses ? I say bewitch Folks, for what else, besides Enchantment, can make truth appear like Falshood, Reason like Absurdity, and the pure Light of the Gospel like thick Darknes ?

It is easy to conceive the answer a Papist will make to the Question ; he will say, that Protestants overrate their own Strength, by supposing that they have Truth, or Reason, or the Gospel on their Side ; he will insist, that although they make a busle about Truth, Reason, and the Gospel, and such big words in Theory, yet, that at bottom they have no more dependence on them, than on Miracles, but place their chief Reliance on the preaching of Lawyers, and the mission of informers. Thus he pretends by one plain, simple explication, to account for a whole system of Mysteries ; and a Man must be very ignorant, who does not conceive, that this is the general sense of Papists. It seems, therefore, incumbent on Protestants, who are desirous of convincing Papists of their Errors, and of fortifying weak Brethren, to account for the continuance, or growth of Popery, in some other manner.

I have accounted for it obviously ; I shew by Facts, and not by vague, metaphysical Reasonings, that the Advantages of the Reformation are thrown away, by the perverse management of some Protestants, of more cunning than sense or virtue ; who in a great measure neglect to make use of the irresistible force of Truth, and instead thereof, betake themselves to old wives Tales and Calumnies, where they must inevitably have the worst of it. Every body sees that this Explication of mine, guards against all Advantages that the Papist can take ; and is indeed the same rational argument the greatest Champions of the Reformation make use of over  
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and over ; which is, that the weaknets or wickedness of some certain of its Professors, bring no real Imputation on the Protestant Cause, which should, and must rest on its own Truth, and on the Gospel. It is plain ther, that all those who would trust it to Truth and Reason, ought in the present Case to argue just as I do, and give up with contempt, all the Calumnies and Misrepresentations of weak Protestants, which bring a Disgrace on it, and always will, on any cause they defend.

However, it appears by some letters published against my Enquiry, that there are Protestants who do not like my Explication ; but if it be false, they who with sagacity discovered I am a Papist, and, with equal Honesty, passed their words to the Public that I am one, without knowing me, are perhaps able to give the true one. The shortest and plainest way in the world to confute me, is to give a better explication, than I have done, of of this seeming Paradox, why Popery prevails against such amazing odds ; or to shew that mine is not sufficient for the effect. This the Public have a right to expect from them, if they dispute the Truth of that I offer ; and the Protestant Religion calls upon them for a discovery of the mysterious supports of Popery. But while they stand aloof on this point, and avoid, with vast circumspection, giving any Explication themselves, however willing they appear to wrangle with me, and make a shew of opposing me, they say nothing to the purpose, and can no more be deemed Antagonists, than a parcel of Poles stuck up with Hats and Coats on them in the front of an army, to make an appearance, and fill up vacancies, can be called Enemies \*.

I am, &c.

A real FREETHINKER.

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\* Saturday, April 19. No Smotherer attributes the Growth of Popery to the Neglect of Protestant Teachers, and the indefatigable Labour of Popish Priests ; to the retaining of many Things amongst Protestants, especially in the Church established, which too much favour Popery ; to their

priestly Powers of Sacrifice in the Mass, and Absolution; to their superstitious Rites and Ceremonies; their palatable Ways of appeasing the Deity; to their Exclusion of other Religions from divine Favour; to their Arts of Defamation and Deceit; to their Denial of the Charges of Idolatry, Image-Worship and Saint-Worship, tho' confronted with their own Books; to their Harangues upon the extream Wickedness, contempt of Religion, and of lawful Authority amongst Protestants; (who yet, he says, are not apt to condemn any thing but what they ought to do) to their Pretences to Piety and Devotion; to their Penances, Fastings, Austerities and Self denials; and the continual Prayer and Celibacy of their Priests and Nuns, which, tho' specious, are the Causes of great Wickedness.

Here, then, the shocking Objection starts up again; Is it the natural Effect of Error to draw sincere Volaries from the Truth, even while they believe in the Gospel, which is the Guide given by God to direct us? Can Men have Faith in the Gospel and read it, and yet miss the Truths of Life? This is a strange Concession, and very bewildering. There is something we want to see in a just light, to help us to disentangle our Thoughts. It is certain, that Doctrines and Actions are capable of being put into very different Lights, tho' a Likeness be preserved, and daily are represented differently, according as the People are affected who draw the Portrait. If we view Things as one Party represent them, without attending to what their Antagonists have to say, we run a mighty Risk of being deceived; and this partial Prospect is the Origin of almost all the Prejudice and Mistake in the world. Let us then see how a Papist would represent these Matters, to which this Gentleman attributes the Growth of Popery, and then my Reader may judge for himself, which of these Lights, or what intermediate Shades satisfy him best.

The Papist would observe, that the Neglect of Protestant Teachers is inconsistent with the Spirit of Christianity, and that the indefatigable Labour of Popish Priests is conformable to the Conduct of the Apostles, and to the express Commands of our Saviour, "Go ye, therefore, and teach all Nations." He would indeed allow, that



that some of our Methodist Preachers go thro' these Kingdoms, and even to the Colonies, where they meet with a Welcome, and sometimes get Plantations; but he would take Notice, that none of them are ever found amongst the barbarous Heathens, with a View to relieve them, in their State of utter Darknes, with the Light of the Gospel, or to suffer Martyrdom in the generous and charitable Attempt; that they leave that Task to the Popish Priests and Jesuits, whom they so liberally revile. He would say, that this general and remarkable Difference depends upon a general, stedfast Cause, by all Rules of good Philosophy and Reason; and he would call upon his Antagonist to assign any other Cause for the Variation, than, that the original, genuine apostolic Spirit resided still in the one, and was perished in the other.

Without entering into the Debate of Transubstantiation, he would say, that the Heart of Man cannot conceive any Thing so expressive of Christian Humility, Self-denial, and of a pure Reliance on the Merits of the Death of Christ, as an offering of the great Sacrifice of the Cross to God for the People; which is at least intended by the Mass. He would say, that the Idea is in itself tremendous beyond Imagination, and adapted to impress People with a Sense of their real State and Duty. He would say, it contained a complete Epitome of Christianity, and presented to the Idea, the Subject and Meaning of whole Volumes.

He would declare, that Priests never grant Absolution, or pretend to a Power of granting it, but expressly on the Conditions of a sincere Repentance, and a firm Resolution of Amendment; that the bringing of such an Absolution to the World, which was otherwise lost, was one of the principal Purposes of the Gospel, and was preached by it; and he would take Notice, that the very Objection made by Protestants to Popish Absolution, is made to Christianity itself, viz. that Forgiveness of sins is an Encouragement to sinning.

Rites and Ceremonies, he would say, are generally the Expression to the Eye, of the religious Truths which ought to have an Influence on our Faith and Practice. He would recollect, that the Jews celebrated the Passover with their Loins girded, and a Staff in their Hands;

and the Feast of the Tabernacles in Tents, to recal the Idea of those Facts of which the instituted Ceremonies were Memento's; he would observe, that Ceremonies in Fact are the Scriptures of the Illiterate, and are like the Writings of the Mexicans, when the Spaniards came amongst them, an universal Language, understood by every Body. It is plain, he would say, that the End or Use of them could not be superseded, or rendered ineffectual by the new Law, no more than the Use and End of Writing, or of Preaching. seeing that the Points of Faith, and the influencing Truths of the Gospel, are as capable of being translated into this ocular, universal Language, as the Old Testament; and that a Memorial to recal the Minds of the Jews to their Deliverance from Egypt, was not of more Consequence to them, than a Memorial to keep the Mind fixed on the offering on the Cross, and our Delivery from the Slavery of Sin and Death, is to us.

Since Catholics indispenfibly require a sincere Repentance, and a firm Purpose of Amendment to appease the Deity, he would insist, that their Way of doing so is not palatable. He would instance in Confession, and ask, is any other religious Appointment so humiliating to our Pride, or so shocking to our corrupt Nature, as this, in which we are to lay open our evil Actions, our secret Words, and even Thoughts, without Disguise, or Alleviation. — He would observe, that the Jewish and infant Christian Church were excluding Churches. That the different Churches of the apostolic Age, such as the Church of Jerusalem, the Church of Ephesus, &c. were not so called on Account of varying Doctrines, as the Lutheran Church, the Calvinist Church, &c. but merely on Account of their local Situation; and that the Doctrine of the Apostles was, "Believe, or ye perish." And to the Charge of Defamation, he would answer, by taking Notice, that of all the direct express Doctrines attributed to the Reformed by Papists, they never denied one; whereas Papists deny several Doctrines imputed to them by Protestants.

He would acknowledge, that Papists deny the Charges of Idolatry, and of Image and Saint-Worship; when Worship is understood in any other Sense than an Honour

nour and Respect, such as Men often in ordinary Life pay one another on a religious Account; for Instance, such as Children pay their Parents when they kneel to them, and beg their Blessing and intercession with God. And he would insist, that seeing Papists profess, that Saints and Angels were created by God, may be annihilated by him, and have no Powers peculiar to themselves, but what he immediately endows them with, it is impossible they can pay Saints or Angels any divine Honours; and all the Respect they yield to Saints and Angels terminate in God, on Account of whose Favour and Service they pay it.

He would insist, that the Commandment was only meant against Idols, and against that Worship amongst the Heathens, which interfered with the Belief, that he, the God, who delivered the Jews out of the Land of Egypt, was the only God and Lord. He would assert, that the Example and Interpretation of God himself, was the best Comment and Explanation of his own Laws, and that the Images of the Cherubims placed in the inner Temple ought to be considered in the Explication of the Law, and amounts to a decisive Declaration, that the fixing the Statues or Pictures of his ministring Servants in Churches was no Breach of it. He would also assert, that the successful Prayers of Moses for the People, the Prayers of the Servants of God desired by St. Paul, and the Command of God himself, that Job's Friends should get Job to intercede with him for them, is fully sufficient to clear the Papists of any Saint or Image Worship offensive to God, when they beg for the Intercession of Saints or Angels; for, without entering into the Discussion, whether the heavenly Inhabitants hear us or no, or whether their Prayers be as prevalent with God now in Heaven, as they were during the Pilgrimage of the Saints on Earth, he would strongly plead, that a Prayer which was lawfully and piously made to a Saint on Earth, could not become Idolatry, when made to the same, or any other Saint in Heaven.

He would say, that, as all the Ordinances of Religion are founded upon some End, some Usefulness and Propriety, the Pictures and Images of Saints in Churches and Places of Devotion, have an inconceivable Effect in confirming our Faith and Reliance on Grace, in giving us an holy emulation, and a robust Habit of Virtue; in

convincing us that Temptations may be overcome; and stimulating us to run manfully in the Race wherein so many with the same Assistance have been successful.

He would insist, that the Popish Mass-Books, Breviaries, and daily Service, contain nothing but what is agreeable to this Exposition, and deducible from it, which Papists never deny; that the Variation does not subsist between the Books and the Declarations of Catholics, but between the Protestant Representations of those Books, and their Declarations; he would acknowledge, that the Denial of Idolatry by Papists is serviceable to their Cause, but he would add that it is so, only because Papists convince those who examine without Prejudice, that their Books and Doctrines are misrepresented.

As to the Contempt of Religion and lawful Authority amongst Protestants; he would say, that they being Masters of Observation and Sense will always discover themselves; that those who travel thro' Popish Countries, or who are conversant with the History of Catholic Ages, will naturally make a Comparison, and on whatever Side the Licentiousness and Irreligion lie, they will be apt to ascribe them to religious Principles, which only appear to be the Cause of the Difference; and this Reflection will arise from the common Sense of Mankind, without any Direction.

Finally, he would readily allow the mighty Prevalence of the Appearances of Piety, Devotion, Fasting, Austerity, Self denial, constant Prayer, and Chastity, in giving Weight and Force to a Man's Preaching. He would observe, that the human Race seem to have an indelible, immovable Sense, that these Virtues concentered together, can only be owing to the divine Power working on the Soul; that the Prepossession of Mankind in their Favour is not owing to Christianity, but to a common Sense or Taste in the Mind, that distinguishes them from Licentiousness, as readily and naturally as the Palate distinguishes sweet from bitter; that these Virtues united were the visible Arms of the Apostles against the Powers of the World, and the external Evidence of the unseen Divinity. He would allow, that these heroic Christian Virtues beget Admiration and Reverence, and therefore, that Men of Hypocrisy and Dissimulation may assume



assume their Appearances to form a Masquerade with, under which horrid Scenes of Wickedness may be performed; but that the Crimes committed under the Appearance, bring no Imputation on the Reality, which admits not of the Wickedness. He would particularly allow, that those who have not Virtue sufficient to preserve their Chastity, ought to marry; but this Allowance, in his Opinion, does not detract from the Excellency of this lovely and respectable Virtue, where it really exists; or ought not to hinder the purified Souls who breathe after God, to attach themselves to him as much as possible. He would observe with St. Paul, that those who marry and have Children, employ themselves for their Families, and are anxious about the Affairs of this World; but that those who confine their Attentions to God are more unattached, and at liberty to please God. He would say, that it is an inconclusive Argument in Luther's Mouth, or in the Mouth of any of his Followers, that no Christians can conquer their Lusts, or that they require being satiated as well as the Appetites of Hunger and Thirst, from his own or their Experience. And he will observe, that the real Power of Grace is particularly demonstrated in a Conquest over Concupiscence.

In this Manner, Papists represent the Causes to which No Smotherer attributes the Growth of Popery. If we suppose their Representation to be but mere White-wash and Sophistry, and, with the Protestant Champion, look on them as Superstitions and Errors, then, when we see by the Success he attributes to them in convincing Man, and by the natural Superiority he allows them over the Gospel given by the Divinity to guide Mankind, even with those who believe in the Gospel, we must own that he lays the Protestant Principle in the Dust, and establishes this confounding and deplorable inference, that the Gospel is not a sufficient Guard against Error, even amongst those who receive it as the Word of God.

Ara-

*A rational Enquiry into the secret Causes of the Continuance of Popery in these Kingdoms.*

L E T T E R IX.

**F**ROM the opposition made to this enquiry by people who profess themselves Protestants, one would imagine I laid the axe to the root of the tree, and that the Reformation had no other arguments to defend it from final ruin, but the fooleries I attacked : if they could have thought of a worse name than a Papist, undoubtedly it would have fallen to my lot.

It is very difficult for a candid person, who is unacquainted with the artificial part of controversy, to judge, from the Letters published by those Gentlemen, what they would be at. Do they defend the illiberal arguments and shifts adopted in the customary way of attacking Popery ? No : That would be an open outrage against honesty and integrity. Do they then, like upright men, condemn and disavow them ? Not that neither ; so far from it, that they call me a Papist, and write against me with great acrimony for doing so. Now it is certain, they would make a much better figure, if they had either candidly disclaimed and condemned those disingenuous, wretched shifts, or had defended them directly. But while they thus halt between two opinions, they become themselves evidence to the public of the truth of my charge, and betray their tender fondness for those chicaneries, that offend every man of sincerity.

One Gentleman, indeed, in the Ledger of March the 15th, ventures to acknowledge, with studied expression, that “ In the heat of controversy between Papists  
“ and Protestants, it is no wonder that several things  
“ may be alledged upon slight grounds, in order to  
“ stigmatize the opposite party. But (he adds) surely  
“ he must be a very superficial or uncandid observer of  
“ what has been published by Protestants against Papists,  
“ not to take notice of the many solid arguments,  
“ which have appeared to prove their tenets absurd,  
“ &c.” Now the whole drift of all I wrote, was to convince

convince men of the necessity of rejecting those things that were urged on slight grounds, in order to stigmatize Papists, and of making use of those solid arguments that will answer the end effectually. What signifies it to me to be told of the stock of provisions locked up in the larder, if I am to starve with hunger in the mean time?

But why all this mincing and winding about in making an acknowledgment, which every man of honesty and good sense ought to make? The case is plain to any one who takes the trouble to look over their letters and mine. They are extremely desirous of preserving their paltry arguments in credit, for the ready use of the crowd and nursery; they would fain support them in being, if they had known how; they are angry at the loss, and part with them as parents do with expiring children. In this distress something must be said to preserve them, if possible; and accordingly, like true Lawyers in behalf of their favourite clients, they stick to them in the most desperate circumstances; and thus they make up their plea. They alledge against me, that I am a Papist, that even allowing a little force to my objections against some weak arguments of Protestants, there remain solid arguments enough in reserve; they make some attempts to weaken my objections against those arguments which I charge to be openly disgraceful to Protestants; and lastly, they are unanimous in defending the persecuting of Papists. This, as far as I can gather, is the sum of all that has been advanced against me hitherto, by those Protestant Correspondents who have undertaken to handle me. That I may not wholly neglect what they alledge, let me consider what they mean by their charge against me, that I am a Papist.

If you ask the maiden aunt, whose charge it is to instruct the children in their Catechism and first principles, the pious lady will inform you, that a Papist is a man who has put off human nature, and all its tender feelings; who has tore himself from the sentiments of friends, country, laws, and his kind, whenever he happens to live in a society of men who differ with him in religious opinions; that in such case he is changed to a fiend; their calamities and woes are his joys; the  
dying

dying groans of mothers, and the cries of expiring babes, clinging to the breast, become his music ; that the burning of houses at the dead hour of the night, when the peaceable and innocent inhabitants are fast asleep ; the cutting of throats and drinking a little of the blood, while it is yet warm with life, are his darling appetites : in short, words can never represent a Papist equal to the vulgar idea, to an imagination that has not received it as the vulgar have, by a thousand bloody and fearful tales, successively repeated, and deeply impressed by the slow hand of time ; for which good purposes are printed and sold cheap to the poor, abundance of pious sermons, books of instruction for Protestant youth, and seasonable preservatives against Popery.

The tremendous name of Papist has answered several of the good purposes for which the idea was framed ; it pulled down the Bishops covered as they were with the badges of the Beast, out of their powers and privileges ; it cut off a stiff Archbishop's head, and his royal Master's soon after ; it singled out every man, who durst be loyal, to the fury of an enraged populace ; it set three kingdoms in flames, and destroyed the constitution ; and it is still piously preserved for the same salutary purposes, when a proper occasion offers. In consequence of this detestable idea, when a Papist is tried for a crime, and there is not actual proof to be had against him, that very circumstance is proof sufficient to find him guilty, because it is his true character to work in the dark ; also such evidence as will not have weight enough to have a bill found against a Protestant, is fully sufficient to hang a Papist. Some curious precedents of this kind are to be found in the trials of Oates's golden days ; and in truth, there appears no proof or evidence whatever, why the Fire of London should be laid to the charge of Papists, but because the Authors (if any) could not be discovered.

I suppose when these Gentlemen give me the title of Papist, they imagined it discharged them of the necessity of finding any other reason or argument against me ; but I here call upon them publicly to produce a single sentiment or passage through my letters, which an honest Protestant ought not to adopt on the subject ; provided



vided always that my own words be quoted, which I strictly insist on, and not such silly Misrepresentations as some of the Letter-writers who censure me, have thought proper to palm on me, even at the moment they were liable to detection. But the true Reason, why they call me a Papist, is obvious enough; in treating on some tender points, I have paid a strict regard to truth; where calumny and persecution are favourites, I have shewn a detestation of them. I have suggested that they are false friends to the Reformation, and in their stead I have recommended Truth and the Gospel, to those who attack Popery: and let me tell those Gentlemen, who call me a Papist on account of my inviolable respect for Truth, that they do a greater injury to Reformation, than they are perhaps aware of.

But let it be supposed that I am really a Papist, what is that to the purpose? since there is no Act of Parliament that changes the nature of Truth in a Papist's mouth; if, in reckoning he happens to say that two and two make four, and if he condemns prevarication and falsehood, it is sure a wretched confutation, to alledge that these are only the assertions of a Papist, and therefore not true; yet this kind of confutation is as confidently used, as a demonstration of Euclid, and is daily imposed as such, on his Majesty's Subjects of Great Britain.

Now, in order that these Gentlemen may make no mistake about it, I will shew them in what circumstance the being a Papist abates of his evidence. When a Papist attempts to offer his own testimony of a secret fact, or a piece of intelligence he pretends to have received by the confession of a certain Protestant of veracity; or by the confession of several of the common people among Protestants; or when he obtrudes upon the public any other kind of intelligence, supported merely by his own veracity; then, his being a Papist wholly destroys his credit; and for the same reason, the incendiary tales, vended from time to time in the News-papers against Papists, are of no other estimation, than to shew the persecuting spirit of the Writers; but when I speak of notorious facts that depend not on my relation for  
their

their credit ; for instance, when I say it is absurd to frame doctrines for Papists, which they neither believe nor teach, but the very reverse ; when I say they are a distressed, insulted people, robbed by public prejudice of that charity which is due to every creature, who bears the sacred human image ; when I say, that persecution for conscience sake, is inconsistent with the principles of Protestants, I insist, that the person who pretends to answer me, by calling me a Papist, notwithstanding any right he may claim by prescription, only makes use of the prepossessions of the public to abuse them, and has said nothing to the discredit of such known truths \*.

I am, &c.

*A real FREETHINKER.*

Advertisement by the Printer of the Ledger, at the foot of this Letter.

\* \* “ We have given, to us, a painful proof of our  
“ impartiality, by inserting this Letter, because it so  
“ greatly deviates from the decorum which we made the  
“ condition of our acceptance for publication. We must  
“ not suffer the carrying of the laws of the kingdom in-  
“ to execution, to be called Persecution, for it is Prose-  
“ cution ; which term implies an offence previously  
“ committed to deserve it, &c.”

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\* April 26, The Real Well-wisher to Reformation attributes the Continuance and Growth of Popery to Prejudice, to the Dexterity of Popish Priests, in suiting their Nonsense to the Nonsense of the Country People, to the Charities which he calls Premiums ; distributed in the Neighbourhood of Catholic Mansion Houses to allure the Poor to Mass. He after, by the Assistance of a little Preface to his kind Reader, explains a Part of the real Freethinker's 9th Letter into a Libel upon the present Judges and Juries ; and to corroborate this Interpretation, in his next Letter, he thinks, if the Freethinker be consistent, he must mean in his foregoing Letters by Luther, Cranmer, Jurieu, &c. not the famous men of those Names, but the Protestant Writers against Popery of the present Times, whom he is slyly abusing under these celebrated Names. Such Vagaries of Imagination sufficiently expose themselves.

I have

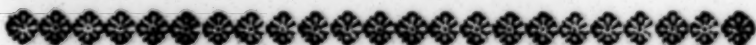
I have now done with these Extracts, and must advertise my Reader, that my Design in making them was to draught out every Thing that approached to the Freethinker's Arguments without thinking myself bound to follow them, where they wholly wandered away from him; yet I have not willingly omitted any Thing like Argument throughout the whole of them. I have indeed omitted in my Abstracts of some Letters, what has been more fully and pertinently applied in others, and contented myself in making Observations on the same Argument once for all, without taking Notice of it when it occurred elsewhere.

It will unavoidably strike every body, that these Letters published against him are no answers to the real Freethinker. He complains of Slanders and Calumnies, that between Man and Man would be looked upon as excessive, criminal, and malevolent. His Opposers answer him, that Catholics hold Principles destructive and inimical to Society, particularly to a Protestant Government; as if those mischievous Principles, if even proved upon them, gave their Enemies a Right to Slander, and misrepresent them in every other Matter. By this shifting, evasive Kind of Answer, they did not clear themselves of the Slanders, and they created a Suspicion, that they were not much more fair in their Charge of Disloyalty.

It is certain, that they ought to demonstrate a greater Deference to Truth. They ought candidly to acknowledge and disavow the Slanders, and rest themselves upon the Objections they had to Papists. But the Nature of their Defence explained their Dispositions very clearly. They judged those Chicaneries and Falsehoods useful, they would, if possible, defend them; they found it shameful to do so openly; they vented their Anger against the Freethinker, for the uneasy Dilemma he had reduced them to, and against Catholics in general, by further Criminations.

There is one Argument, which by the Use these Gentlemen make of it, seems to be their Sheet anchor and principal Dependence. It consists in calling their Antagonist a Papist, a Jesuit, an unmasked Jesuit. If the Meaning of this Argument be, that the Papist or Jesuit do not speak Truth, it is a far more satisfactory Answer to prove the Falsehood: but if they mean, that Truth from the Pen of a Papist, or Jesuit, has no Conviction, no intrinsic Force, they

they are mistaken ; whatever End it be urged for, it is a very pitiful, illogical Argument, and is evidently kept in reserve as an Answer, for what cannot otherwise be answered, in order to make up from Prejudice, what is wanting in Truth. If they call a Man a Papist for Falsehood, they ought first to prove the Falsehood. but if they call him so for speaking Truth, he ought not to be called a Papist or an Enemy to Protestants but an honest Man.



*A rational Enquiry into the secret Causes of the Continuance of Popery in these Kingdoms.*

### L E T T E R X.

**I** DO not know whether I am to look on your Advertisement at the end of my last Saturday's Letter, as a Prohibition to trouble you any farther, or no ; for where a restraint on the usual modes of expression takes place, there a free enquiry must cease, and the Freethinker ~~pretend~~ to speak no more.

Every Reader and Writer of common sense and honesty must approve of the qualifications you require in the Letters sent you for publication ; Candour and Decency are certainly due to the Public, and eminently necessary in the character of a real Freethinker : but as you are pleased to think I have trespassed against Decorum, by using the word *Persecution*, where I ought to have said *Prosecution*, give me leave to tell you in what sense I used that offensive Term.

That particular kind of Prosecution which is carried on against a man when he is actually guilty of no other crime against the State, but adhering to a Religion which the Civil Power interdicts, I call Persecution : and I confess that, if this be not Persecution, I am yet to learn what it is.

The Persecutions the primitive Christians suffered, were no more than Prosecutions according to the Laws of the Roman Empire. The Inquisition makes a part of the Constitution or Civil Law of Spain and Portugal ; and the arrears against Protestants are as formally registered, and become as much a part of the Laws of France,



France, as any others of its Laws; yet it is certain that Protestants call Prosecutions carried on by the Inquisition, and by the French, by the name of Persecutions: but now that I am singled out to the crowd for a Papist, it is construed improper in me to use my words in the same sense Protestants do. This is, indeed, a short way of putting an end to the Dispute to my Disadvantage; nor shall I, under such restraints, attempt to protract it any longer: for when once it becomes a rule to deem uncandid or improper, the use of words in their ordinary signification, a Freethinker under such exclusion, can no longer exist. And I submit it to every person of candour, whether it be not equal to a hundred demonstrations against the prosecution I am speaking of, that the very people who plead for carrying it on, cannot bear to be told of it by the real name, or to hear it pronounced; that at the idea, honest conscience flies in their faces, and that the mind shrinks and hides from it. I have no more to do, Sir, but to take my leave of you with thanks for the indulgence you have hitherto given me; and I must say, that it is with regret I find an English News-paper is a kind of *expurgatory Index*, where a Writer must soften his expression a good deal below par, to become inoffensive.

I am, &c.

A Real FREETHINKER.



*A rational Enquiry into the secret Causes of the Continuance of Popery in these Kingdoms.*

#### LETTER XI.

I Have ventured once more into public, notwithstanding the Despiser of Popery's menace. If I be a Papist and obnoxious to the laws, it must be allowed that an information against me, is a very decisive and silencing method of answering me: but I have not the same contemptible idea he has of the spirit of my country's laws. Believe me, those great men who reared the sacred

cred basis of English Liberty, did not calculate laws to gratify malice, or to support, by contributions on the Government, the worthy race of Informers.

I am, Sir, a British subject; I have a birthright to the laws and liberties of my country, and my Letters are an evidence of the noble idea I have of those liberties. In their Cause I have ventured to attack popular prejudices, because I think an Englishman is capable of surmounting even such, in the cause of honest freedom. The subject I took up, could not fail to rouse the bigotted and prejudiced to arms; that ever was, and ever will be the case. Yet it is a truth, that I have not cast a single reflection on the established religion of my country, nor writ a syllable in defence of any tenet of Popery. And once more I call publicly on my Antagonists, to produce any one passage throughout my Letters which a fair upright Protestant ought not to say on the subject, provided my own words be quoted in evidence, and they be left to express their own meaning, without being adulterated by any spurious addition made for the sake of producing a new meaning, not to be found in the original.

It is such a misrepresentation of a passage in one of my Letters, that occasions my present address. In speaking of the oppressions which the vulgar prejudices against Papists drew upon them, I hinted at some notorious circumstances in Charles the Second's time; the Papists were found guilty, and executed on the evidence of such witnesses as were not afterwards esteemed credible enough against Protestants to have the Bills found. These are known, recorded facts, and I expressly referred for the precedents of this partiality to Oates's days, which in explicit terms, cut off all application to after times; and the retrospect fully answered my design, which was to give my Readers an idea of the wrongs Papists suffered, when men prejudiced against them built any part of the proof of the crime on the principles they attributed to Papists.

A Gentleman who styles himself *A real Well-wisher to Reformation*, for reasons that are pretty obvious, has discovered another meaning in my words. He is positive I am characterizing the present times, and that I must

must mean to abuse present Judges and Juries, as if it were not universally the custom to refer to times past, for lessons that illustrate the human passions; and because his readers, however kind and obliging to him, could never from my words conceive such a foreign, extravagant meaning, he seriously informs them, by way of introduction to his discovery, that it happens that Papists are executed at Tyburn and other places, for robbery, murder, &c. as well as Protestants; and that under covert, I have those felons in view, and am actually arraigning the rectitude of the present Judges and Juries; as if I could be so stupid as to maintain before the Public, that Catholics may not be guilty of such crimes, and deserve death, or that it were not notorious, that a man's religion in such trials never enters into the charge or enquiry; and as if I would chuse a case for illustration, which is neither evident, nor credible, preferable to the case in Oates's days, which is recorded and indisputable. Having palmed this strange application on me, he asks with kind concern, are our Judges and Juries justly charged with this inhuman partiality? But the candid honest man ought to consider, that I am not yet impeached, or that perhaps there is no Titus Oates ready to swear against me. It is time enough when these circumstances concur, to wrest my words to my destruction, and to devise the means of irritating Judges and Juries against me. Since he is so good at divination, and is certain I am characterizing the present times, it would be equally curious to discover who I mean by Luther, Cranmer, Jurieu, and the Popish Bishop of Meaux.

It is an ungrateful task to expose the odious part of human nature. I will therefore make no reflections on this Letter-writer's Spirit, or on all, the Papists have to dread from it; my humane readers of all religions will make them for me. It is to allay the effects of such furious tempers, that God, the universal parent of the human race, who sent antidotes along with poisons, in his mercy gave Patriots and Lovers of Mankind to the world.

To combat this inhuman spirit, and make it blush at the various arts and calumnies it employs to frustrate  
and

and undermine the sacred feelings of the compassionate heart, I took up my pen. I did not write in the character of either a Papist or a Protestant; I wrote in the character of a real Freethinker, which requires only an unbiassed adherence to truth and integrity. It signifies nothing in the enquiry I made, what my religion is, or whether I am of any religious denomination at all; the important Question is, have I spoke Truth with the Freedom that becomes it?

As this is the last Letter, Mr. Printer, which I intend to trouble you with on this subject, and I know every word I say is in danger of misconstruction, let me explain what kind of toleration I plead for in behalf of Roman Catholics. They are the most discouraged of any party in this kingdom; let them be so; the constitution which has the guardianship of the people, has a right to determine who is to be trusted, and the degree of confidence to be placed in every religious party. Those who are sincere in their principles of Christianity ought not to complain, that there are a few crosses and inconveniencies thrown in their way; but I must assert, that it is a very dangerous Precedent, and unbecoming this nation so justly renowned for liberty and a vindication of the rights of human nature, to suffer a party of men, who as cordially hate the established Church, as they do the Papists, to form an inquisition against any religious party, upon laws made in very different circumstances from the present, and that in their nature subvert the very foundation of the Reformation.

Whatever have been the causes formerly of making hostile laws against Papists, they at present deserve not the scourge of them. Since you think it indecent, I will not call it Persecution when men are punished, who have been guilty of no crime against the State, but the profession of a religion agreeable to the dictates of their consciences; but this kind of punishment is precisely what we call persecution in France and Spain: and if it be allowable in them to speak of us, in the same language we speak of them, they will retort the charge with seeming justice, and defend their persecutions by the most plausible arguments in the world.

The



The distinction between punishing Papists for their religion, and punishing them for religious principles destructive to the society, is common to all persecutions. The Spanish inquisition, which makes a part of the law of the nation, and is no part of the Catholic Institute, is founded on the pretence of preserving the peace of the kingdom, and of keeping out Doctrines, which, as they alledge, rend and confound all human societies where they get footing. The persecutions in France also, are carried on wholly by a process of civil law, and the arrears on which they are founded, set forth that their intention is to preserve the peace and constitution of the kingdom. In like manner the old heathen Romans persecuted the first Christians, as enemies of mankind; and under that character, the silent passive victims were handed over to the magistrates. In short, this is the invariable pretence of all persecutions. Now, Catholics deny the dangerous principles imputed to them; and it is notorious, that they have given distinguished proofs of their fidelity and loyalty to Protestant Princes, notwithstanding their provocations; and it is not even pretended, that the Catholics now in being, are personally guilty of the crimes with which they are charged, otherwise than that it is supposed, from Principles which they deny, that they have a mental tendency to crimes which they do not practice.

It is observed in the Letters wrote against me, that the present Government does not persecute, as if I had charged them with doing so; this insinuation calls upon me to declare my sentiments, which are those of every fair and candid person, that the English constitution and government, since the accession of the illustrious line of Hanover, seem to have been inspired by the guardian genius of human nature; the Catholics have been considered as men and subjects, and after a stormy and inauspicious century, have at length been suffered to rest in safety and peace each under his own vine and fig tree. It is easy to see that I am contending only with those fiery writers and declaimers, who employ every detestable art to prevent the humanity and charity of mankind, and to whet the rage and enmity of the Public against the defenceless Papists.

It requires but little insight into the secret springs of traffic, to discover that where persecution appears once without disguise, there Commerce must pack up and retire, tho' perhaps gradually. The remote causes on which great events depend, are often seemingly very trifling; and the constitution of Trade is so exceedingly delicate, that sometimes the most discerning eye cannot observe the decay, till it be too late for recovery. The produce of Spain and Portugal is gold and silver, which they are willing to exchange for our manufactures, and we are willing to take the trouble off their hands, of manufacturing for themselves: but the French make them the same offer; yet it is their interest to deal with us, rather than to aggrandize ambitious neighbours who live at their doors. What good reason can we have to give these ready-money customers a disgust to us, which however little, will have its effect in their negotiations and intercourse? The artful Hollanders, who have more on all accounts to fear from Papists than the English, allow them a toleration to say their prayers in what manner they please, without disturbance. No Portuguese or Spaniard, who returns home from the United Provinces, can make a report there, of Priests being taken into custody, and chapels shut up, to plague men for worshipping God their own way.

Before I bid my Antagonists a final adieu, let me give them one piece of advice, which they seem to stand in great need of: it is, that they appear at least, well pleased to have it proved, that there is no occasion for distressing Papists, and listen with patience to the examination, whether they really be the miscreants they are represented to be, or no. Those who write against me, ought not, in their passion, to betray a determined resolution against conviction and humanity before the Public, who have the sentiments of virtue, and will readily discover the rancour and prejudice that prompt men to personal revenge and information. It is certain, that if the Popish Priesthood chuse to work in the dark, if they shun the light, and I be a Papist, I have betrayed the cause and scheme of the Popish Clergy, by entering upon a free disquisition; and whether designedly or no, I have

I have put matters into the channel Protestants desire ; which is, that Papists should examine and reason ; but have not my Antagonists demonstrated, that, whatever they pretend, they are not pleased Papists should make a free enquiry ? And, that altho', when the Popish Clergy are modest and silent, they charge them with retiring into darkness ; yet they are much more alarmed, when any body they take for a Papist offers to speak his sentiments, or to make a free discussion ?

Upon a review of my Letters, I submit it to the judgment of the Public, whether I have not shewn a strict regard to candour and truth ; and how far the Gentlemen who wrote against me, preserved the same temper. What they say of me signifies little ; it is the impartial Public who must judge of both, and to them I appeal.

I am, &c.

A real FREETHINKER.



*The real Freethinker did not appear after the eleventh Letter, probably because he found no real Antagonist : the following Letters conduced to bring on the train of Reflections that follow them, and they are connected with those Reflections.*

**Y**OUR Correspondent, a *real Free-thinker*, has justly exposed the insufficiency, injustice, and folly of the means hitherto used, to prevent the growth of Popery in these kingdoms. The same arguments may be justly applied against the like practices in Popish countries, to prevent the growth of Protestantism.

In every state, such means are unreasonable, tyrannical and ineffectual ; and on experience, have been ever found to operate contrary to the designs of the contrivers. If Protestantism be true Christianity, in vain do Spaniards light their inquisition-fires ; and Frenchmen let loose their blood-hounds, to destroy its professors. If Popery be the true Christianity, in vain do English, Irish, and Scotch Protestants seek to defeat it

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by penal laws against papists. Whichever of them is the cheat, the only warrantable and probable means to withdraw men from the error, are reason and argument. If the truth remains with either, it is still "the power of God, unto salvation," and requires not to be goaded by the officious arm of secular force.

That suffering Protestants in Popish countries, and suffering Papists in Protestant kingdoms, wish for a change which would better their conditions, is not to be doubted: It is natural and reasonable, that men unjustly oppress'd, should be pleas'd with the prospect of exemption from the yoke that galls them.

The Clergy, of every denomination, are the prime sources of all the rigours justly complain'd of by men dispoiled of their social rights, for speculative errors which affect not the interest of society. They, under the false pretence of promoting religion, first lighted the brands of persecution, and scattered them amongst mankind, and, but for their assiduous endeavours, they would have long since been extinguished.

In spite of all their efforts to the contrary, every village in Europe shews us the virtues of humanity, and the enjoyments of social friendship, still subsisting amongst the unbought of every communion.

Had the sacred order, agreeably to their duty, been as solicitous to heal and conciliate mens hearts, as they have been to enflame and divide them, the Christian world would at this day bear a different aspect. Happy would it be for mankind, had those spiritual militants, worried and gored only each other, and left the Laity in peaceable possession of mutual charity, social intercourse, good neighbourhood, and friendly confidence.

The Roman Pontiff, who for temporal power and temporal gain, first led the way, and set the example, has been faithfully copied by his spiritual brethren of succeeding times, wherever their influence could prevail, the wreath and the rod have been held forth, not to crown the worthy, and punish the pernicious, but to decorate the hypocritical Impostor, and scourge to conformity candid and steady virtue. The histories of all countries, in all ages, from the commencement of  
Popish



Popish tyranny down to the present period, afford woe-ful proofs, that these charges are not exaggerated.

The Author of nature intended men for society, and entitles every man to the advantages of that condition, who is free from all principles and practices injurious to the *civil good* of society. The great Giver alone, can repeal that universal charter: HE has not done it, nor delegated that power to any of his creatures: How impiously presumptuous, then, must they be, who, unauthorised, assumed the power of doing it! how blindly wicked who think they render God good service, by plundering, tormenting, and sweeping off the face of the earth his noblest Images, sincere, upright, and dauntless men!

Popish governments owe all social benefits to their loyal Protestant subjects: Protestant states owe them to their loyal Popish subjects. If one of these powers withhold their people's native rights, 'tis no excuse for the other that their own unjust conduct is countenanced by their neighbour's wicked example. I know the pretence is, that they punish them only for the disloyal tenets they suppose them to hold; but this is only a pretence. If they doubt the loyalty of any of their civil associates, they ought to prove them by some reasonable and sufficient test; a test calculated to admit all who shall prove themselves worthy of social trust, whether they be, or be not dissenters from established speculations. By such a measure, they would distinguish the worthy from the unworthy, and the self-defending rigours of government would fall upon these only, who deserve them. What kind of test may be reasonably required from suffering Protestants groaning under the Popish tyranny, I will not at present say; but will submit to public consideration, whether the following test, (copied from a Dublin news-paper) be not effectual and sufficient to qualify our native Papists, for the advantages of society under this Protestant government.

“ I A. B. do hereby engage and swear, that I will from henceforth during my life, bear true faith and allegiance to his Majesty King George the Third, his heirs and successors, whom to the utmost of my power, I will aid, support and defend, hereby utterly renoun-

cing all obedience and attachment to Charles Stuart, and every other person pretending a right to the crown of these realms, whom, as likewise their adherents, I will to the utmost of my Power oppose in any attempt he or they may make upon the same. I hereby also deny, renounce and abjure any right in the Pope of Rome, or his successors to the exercise or claim of any temporal jurisdiction over these realms: I abjure and renounce also that impious position, that no faith is to be kept with persons of a different Communion from my own, or that the horrid guilt of perjury may be incurred to serve any cause whatsoever, or that dispensations for committing the same are lodged with the Pope, or any other power on earth, and this abjuration I make in the plain and ordinary sense of the words, without any prevarication or mental reservation whatever. — So help me God."

Should such a test be offered and accepted, it will be an evidence that those doctrines of Popery, *about which alone* human laws should take cognizance, are absolutely renounced.

The refusal of it, will be an evidence of the *traiterous designs of the refusers*, will justify a continuation of the legal severities *against them*, and it is to be hoped, produce penalties still more effectual to preserve the Public from *their* destructive machinations\*.

I am, Sir, your old acquaintance,

IMPARTIAL.

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\* *The observation I shall make on this Letter is, that if the fears of the disloyalty of Papists, were the true motives of those who urged a prosecution of Popery, as the Letter-writers against the real Freethinker asserted, and not a mere pretence, to cover the genuine spirit of persecution, which they were conscious a Protestant could not openly avow agreeable to his principles, they would have closed with this Writer's proposal, and acknowledged this to be a fair and sufficient test to Papists.*

*There are two separate authorities to be abjured in Impartial's Test, viz. "The Pope's power in temporals as well as in the deposition of Princes, and the Sovereignty of the*

the Stuarts ;" the latter of which depends upon a principle of indefeasible hereditary right, which very many Protestants of the Church of England and Presbyterians hold, and is not peculiar to any Christian Church or profession. If the Test was divided and an abjuration on each of these heads offered separately, then would the principles of Papists distinctly appear, and a fair judgment might be passed upon them. For indisputably those who would not abjure the Pope's temporal authority and deposing power, are intolerable in any state out of the Pope's dominions, and deserve to be treated accordingly in this government, even tho they renounced all attachment to the Stuart family. On the contrary, such Catholics as abjure that stretch of papal authority, but refuse to renounce the Stuart family, are only abettors of the indefeasible hereditary right, and Non-jurors on the same principle that Protestants of all denominations have been so. There are two other possible cases that may arise from these tests, viz. That Catholics abjure both authorities, or abjure neither; in the first case they are certainly to be reputed good subjects, while their practice agrees with their principles; in the second case, they are to be looked upon as enemies to society.

If the Letter-writers against the Papists, had really believed what they themselves advanced, that the Papists were enemies to the King or Government, they would directly press them to this candid Gentleman's test, and shew, by the refusal, the truth of their own accusations. But on the contrary, they passed this Letter in conscious silence, as if no such test appeared. A second observation that arises from this Letter is, the dissingenuity of those Letter-writers, and of a certain dignified personage in the Church quoted by one of them, in asserting, that Papists have not given the security other subjects do give to the Government of their Loyalty, or publicly disavowed the dangerous principles laid to their charge; since it was never put in their power to give such a security: for there was no oath tendered to them, but what required of them besides a security for their Loyalty, in effect, a renunciation of their Religion.

I HAVE read with a considerable degree of attention the various letters in your Paper concerning Popery. The subject was first started by the *real Freethinker*, in an enquiry into the cause of the growth of Popery in these kingdoms. He wrote with great temper, candour and perspicuity, and made several very pertinent observations upon the subject. Whether that writer was a Catholic or no, is of little consequence ; reasons from one of that persuasion ought, with every ingenuous mind, to have just the same weight, as if they fell from the pen of the staunchest Protestant. It appeared to me, taking the fact for granted, that Popery has increased ; that the obvious reason to be assigned for it is, that that system has not enjoyed toleration. There is something in the human frame, that ever will resist imposition. Tell a man that he must not think in such, and such a manner, upon a given proposition, and it is ten to one but he endeavours to find plausible reasons to justify himself in his own mind in being of the opinion forbidden. Oppression and persecution will never quash error and absurdity : they gather from thence fresh strength, and, if I may so say, aggregate vigour.

The experience of all ages has proved this ; and one would have hoped mankind in general so far convinced of it, that there would not have been found at this day, in this Protestant country, any persons so very wicked as to attempt to revive and enforce dormant penal laws against any sect whatsoever. The Protestant religion stands upon the firm basis of private judgment : whoever attempts to take that away, is an enemy to Protestantism, let his professions be what they will. Every man, in matters of mere opinion, has as much a right to dictate to another, as another can have to dictate to him ; where then can exist the arrogant superiority that claims the right of punishing men for thinking ? It exists no where but at Rome. I beg your pardon, Sir, I should have said it ought to exist no where else.

Let Protestants once set up the vain pretence to despotism, and, to me, their reformation is not worth one serious reflection. All the cruelty, oppression and bloodshed on account of religion, since the first promulgation of



of Christianity, and perhaps before, having had their rise in that infernal diabolical principle, which assumes the power of punishing for conscience-sake. You will from hence judge, that I would, as far as I am able, be an advocate for universal toleration, Popery not excepted, notwithstanding the current runs strong with your correspondents the other way. I leave, as quite foreign to the argument, and as below my notice, all altercations about particular doctrines; there are in most systems, in my opinion, many absurdities. There are those who, by their practice, deny their principles every day; and 'tis to their honour, and to the credit of human nature, that they do so: for example, Calvinism, strict Calvinism, if I at all understand the terms they use, denies that the personal behaviour of any man, will be the efficient cause of his final acceptance with God. Do the Calvinists by their practice shew, that this absurd opinion makes them, as might naturally be expected from it, careless of their moral character? I will do them the justice to say, it does not. Catholics are charged with holding, as an article of faith, that they are not bound to fulfil their engagements with Heretics. Ask the Merchants upon 'Change, who trade to Catholic countries, whether they experience the operation of this principle upon their Catholic correspondents? I will be bound to say, from no little experience of my own, that their answer will be, they do not. I am sorry therefore, exceeding sorry, to see your correspondent *Antipapista*, under various and different signatures, labouring (if I at all understand him) to shew, that Popery ought not to be tolerated. The quarter from whence those letters come, I know very well; I know the integrity and goodness of heart, which the writer of them possesses; and 'tis from that knowledge, that he has always had my warmest friendship: but I lament extremely, to see in him so glaring an example of the inconsistency of mankind. That an enthusiast should be an advocate for persecution, amazes me not at all, 'tis perfectly in character; but that one of the warmest friends to liberty and free enquiry, should so far forget himself and his principles, as to stand up repeatedly in public papers, to do what in him lies to call down the penal laws upon the

heads of the Papists, is to me a degree of infatuation and blindness beyond measure astonishing. Popery he has said is a worldly scheme, is not religion; the consequence he would therefore have drawn is, that it is not an object of toleration. But, pray, Sir, what does toleration import? the plain obvious meaning, without busying ourselves with etymology, is, an indulgence to, and forbearance with the errors, mistakes and misconceptions of tender consciences. To say that truth wants toleration is an absurdity in reasoning, however common it may be in fact that it does want it. To shew, therefore, any doctrine, any principle, any tenet to be absurd, or ridiculous, is to shew evidently, that it is entitled to toleration.

Your correspondent knows very well, that penal laws hang over his own head; and where will he draw the line or fix the boundaries; which laws shall be put in execution, and which sleep? The cry is now against Popery and Papists. It is easy to turn it against Arians and Socinians: and an artful advocate, in a Court of Justice, would, for a *good fee*, declaim with equal vehemence against the dangerous tendency of each: but we are very happy that our Courts of Law discountenance all informations that tend to disturb the peace of society, by the revival of obsolete statutes, made in times of political disturbances; and for particular political purposes; and have from the Bench checked *busy meddlers*, as *righteous overmuch*, and concerning themselves with what in no wise belonged to their station. I hope your correspondent will profit from that reproof which he equally deserves with the *informing carpenter-constable* who received it; and that we shall see from that quarter no more inflammatory Letters, which tend to the revival of obsolete, persecuting, oppressive Statutes, against any sect whatsoever.

I am, Sir, yours,

A MERCHANT.

Some

*Some Remarks on the Merchant's Letter in the Ledger of  
July 19, 1766, by ANTI-PAPISTA.*

SIR,

**Y**OUR extremely genteel and friendly manner of treating me, except in the article of tolerating Popery, demands, and has my grateful acknowledgments. But inasmuch as, if I understood the design of your last letter, to urge my farther intention to the subject, on which we apparently differ in our conceptions, I will therefore make some farther animadversions, by which, if I cannot convince you of mistake, yet I hope to persuade you, I am as far from encouraging any kind of persecution, or restraint laid on the rights of conscience, as you could wish me to be. "Oppression and persecution, you justly observe, will never quash error and absurdity; they gather from thence fresh strength, and aggregate vigour. The experience of all ages has proved this."—And again, you as justly say, "The Protestant Religion stands upon the firm basis of private Judgment; so that whoever attempts to take that away, is an enemy to Protestantism, let his professions be what they will. Every man, in matters of mere opinion, has as much right to dictate to another, as another can have to dictate to him; where, then, can exist the arrogant superiority that claims the right of punishing men for thinking? It exists no where but at Rome."—Here we are perfectly agreed. Nor can you, *worthy Sir*, look with more detestation than I do, on this arrogant claim of superiority! But it is because of this claim existing as essential to the Papal profession, or, if you will, the Roman Catholic Religion, that I dread its being nourished and countenanced in a land of Protestant Liberty. Remove but this its horrid claim, do but give me evidence, that this is no longer essential to Popery, and I have not a single objection to the unlimited toleration of that profession.

You seem to have taken offence at my objecting to its toleration, because it is *a worldly scheme; and therefore cannot be a religion*; but in truth, Sir, that is not, nor

ever was the principle on which I drew the conclusion ; for had that been the case, I might have easily seen, that there are worldly schemes tolerated among Protestants of their own devising. But the object of my dread, has ever been, “ that infernal diabolical principle which assumes the power of punishing for conscience-sake.” And from hence you will judge, that, as far as I am able, I would discountenance and oppose this principle. This arrogant superiority, which claims the right of punishing men for thinking, you have said, *exists in the Romish Communion* : for this reason, and this only, I object to the toleration of Popery, even because it is essential to the profession. Nor do I think the principle more abhorrent in a Papist than it is in a Protestant. With me, the Protestant who holds this infernal diabolical principle, which assumes the power of punishing for conscience sake, is a most execrable character ! nor do I think he has a better right or claim to toleration than a Papist. Was I apprehensive of having advanced any argument, that has deservedly fixed on me the character of *an advocate for persecution*, I should most readily own with you, *that I am under a degree of insatiation and blindness, beyond measure astonishing*. God knows my heart, there is not any thing I wish for more, than to understand and practise upon those principles of *truth and liberty*, which are the pillars of his moral government. Nor would I presume to narrow the boundaries of liberty, which the parent mind has established, as the universal privilege of mankind. *An indulgence to, and forbearance with the errors, mistakes, and misconceptions of tender consciences*, should every where be given ; and will be so, by every man who understands, to any good purpose, the teachings of Jesus. “ For, “ to say that *truth* wants toleration is an absurdity in “ reasoning, however common it may be in fact, that “ it does want it : to shew, therefore, any doctrine, “ any principle, any tenet to be absurd or ridiculous, “ is to shew evidently, that it is entitled to toleration.” Herein, Sir, you have my most hearty agreement, they are principles I truly reverence : yet, you plainly perceive, that, as it lies in my mind, there is an infinite difference between the *errors, mistakes, and misconceptions* of

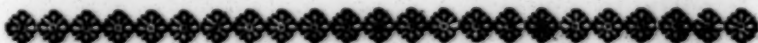


*of tender consciences, and that infernal, diabolical principle which assumes the power of punishing for conscience-sake; or, as you before say, the arrogant superiority that claims the right of punishing men for thinking: which claim, you allow, has its existence at Rome. If, therefore, your own description given of Popery be just, as I am firmly persuaded it is, and if there can be no comparison made between the infernal, diabolical principle and claim, and that of the indulgence due to erroneous or mistaken tender consciences; then you must hold me free from the charge of being "that glaring example" of inconsistency of mankind, which you have so extremely lamented.*

Is it any kind of proof of my being an advocate for persecution, that I am pleading against a toleration of that infernal, diabolical principle which will persecute? or can it be shewn, that I have had any other object, in the fears I have had about the spreading of Popery? If I cannot, you must be persuaded, Sir, that I look upon myself, as entitled to a yet more entire and compleat interest in your friendship. If I do not mistake the person I am addressing, I have no small obligations to his favours.

July 22, 1766.

ANTI-PAPISTA.



**Y**OUR correspondent, who signs himself a Merchant, in your paper of last Saturday, judges very truly of the right of mankind to exercise their reason in all religious matters; but surely it is one thing to enjoy liberty of conscience for themselves, and another to endeavour at disquieting that of others, and especially that of those who are members of the national church.

God forbid that any man should be molested in this country of freedom, for matters of conscience, as far as relates to himself; and so far, there is full toleration, as there ought to be, in this kingdom. But if men go farther, and endeavour to undermine the state and church, by making profelytes to a persuasion that is,  
and

and ever must be at enmity with both, and which would admit of no toleration, if those who profess it could get the upper hand; then are those people such abusers of toleration, as to be guilty of high crimes, by the laws of the kingdom, and are so far from deserving favour, as to merit severe punishments.

Nor are his arguments, drawn from the experience of the Merchants upon 'Change, of any weight in this matter; because the well-doing of all Traders, whether Christians, Jews, Turks, or Infidels, must depend on their manifesting strict honour in their dealings, as otherwise they would become injured or ruined by the loss of character and credit. But the case is far different in religious policy, and especially that of the Papists, who are directed to keep their faith with those of other churches no longer, than while it is for serving their own purposes; which are, first, for their own security and advantage, while they are acquiring strength, and, finally, to subdue and exterminate, when they are become enabled so to do; and then so they must do, under the penalty of eternal damnation, whenever it is enjoined them; of which kinds of practices there have been too many examples to leave a rational doubt existing of the genius and spirit of their church.

It is beyond dispute, that they began the present controversy by endeavouring indirectly to discredit Protestantism; and, at the same time, to avail themselves of the great lenity of our temporal and spiritual government for pushing at unlimited toleration, not only in the indulgence of their own religious consciences, but also that of disquieting the religious consciences of others, or, in short, the enjoyment of religious toleration to such an extent as they themselves will no where allow, nor would suffer here, if they were permitted, with all their well known industry, so to increase their numbers as to become enabled to get the mastery of the national church, which is all that their antagonists have aimed to prevent. In fine, no one has discovered the least inclination to disturb them in the quiet enjoyment of their own consciences, which is all that toleration can admit of in any country. But if they proceed farther, and endeavour to disquiet the consciences  
of

of others, then they most grossly abuse toleration ; and merit hanging by the laws of the land, as enemies to the government ; which if they wilfully deserve, it is to be hoped they will meet with.

I am, Sir, your humble servant,

A TRADER, but not in Conscience.

Read in your Paper of last Saturday, a Letter wrote by a person who calls himself a Merchant, wherein he discovers himself no friend to the present government, under which we live ; for in one part of his Letter he declares himself an advocate for universal toleration, and then adds (for fear we should overlook his great esteem for the friends of the Pope) Popery not excepted. Who your Correspondent is, the Merchant is hinting at in his Letter, I cannot say, but he charges him with saying, the Catholics hold as an article of faith, that they are not bound to fulfil their engagements with Heretics. And then adds, ask the Merchants upon 'Change, who trade to Catholic countries, whether they experience the operation of this principle upon their Catholic Correspondents? He then adds, I will be bound to say, from no little experience of my own, that their answer will be, they know not. Now, Sir, that your Correspondent is a Merchant, I can't deny ; but there are many sorts of Merchants, some trade for one thing, and some for another ; and I look upon your new Correspondent to be a trader in Popish superstition ; for I am certain that no friend to the present happy constitution can once think of having the blood-thirsty Papists tolerated to carry on their trumpery religion in these kingdoms. Hath not this land suffered enough already by the scarlet Whore ? How often hath she made herself drunk with Protestant blood ! and is not she longing to play the same game over again ? How were man, woman and child knocked down a few days ago, only for hearing a Clergyman of the Church of England preach the pure doctrine of the church ; and the cry was, *Down with the Heretics ?* This is only

only a foretaste of what the Protestants may justly expect, if ever Popery should be tolerated in these kingdoms. But may God confound all their schemes, or else woe to England that is already almost over-run with Popish superstition. The Popish Merchant (for so I must conceive of him) seems to express his concern, that any persons should be so wicked as to attempt to revive, and enforce dormant penal laws, against any sect whatsoever. How he seems to put on an hypocritical cloke, and would fain make us believe he is not for hurting any Scot, when, Mr. Printer, if he is a Papist, (as no doubt appears to me but he is) he with the rest of the poor deluded party would destroy us Heretics, without any law at all, witness the above hint; therefore it cannot be wicked to put the law of the kingdom in force against the wilful breakers of it, though it be done by a Reforming Carpenter-Constable, as the Merchant calls him. It is true, I know but little of this constable, but among the friends of his country, he is looked upon as a useful man; and I remember the Judge who tried the Popish Priest (for I was present at the trial) told the Jury, he thought the Carpenter acted from an honest principle. This the Merchant chuses to conceal. Mr. Printer, I should be glad to know who this Merchant is, and what he trades in: I suppose him to be a real Merchant, and trades from a far country, and that his lading consists of Popish trumpery. I remember we had an account in the public papers, some time since, of a great number of crucifixions and other Popish merchandize seized by some of the King's Officers; who certainly did their duty: perhaps your Merchant correspondent was the owner of them. If so, I don't wonder he is so much against the laws being put in execution against Popery; for if that was done, the hope of his gain in that part of his merchandize, relating to Crucifixes, &c, would be lost. If, Sir, it was lawful to seize this sort of merchandize, as things not suffered to be had in this Protestant country, surely it cannot be unlawful to seize the Priests who are the cause of their coming over, and when they are over, the cause of the deluded people making use of them. What your correspondent Anti-papist is I cannot



cannot tell, but the Merchant declares he knows him very well, and that he is a man of integrity and goodness of heart. I wish I had the same reason to say so of the person who writes against him, which it will ever be impossible to do, while he maintains such principles as, if countenanced, will certainly overturn our happy Constitution, both in Church and State; for as Popery rises, the contrary religion must fall. I can assure the Merchant, that before the laws were so much as attempted to be put in execution against the Papists, all the mild means possible were made use of to restrain them from their unlawful proceedings, but to no purpose; and to the knowledge of many both in the city and country, orders were sent to the Priests to shut up their Mass-houses, which was complied with for a few weeks, and then without any toleration opened again. Such are the obedient subjects of Rome, not of England; for that man can never be called obedient, who willfully breaks the law of his country: but such are the Papists. When a man, Mr. Printer, wants to secure his field from the ravening beasts of prey, he builds a wall; when a breach is made he repairs the wall again. Thus a wise man acts; he does not say, let the beasts go in and devour the choice fruits, which I have, by much labour, brought to great perfection. How was the choice fruits of the gospel brought to such perfection in this happy land? was it not by much labour? How did our forefathers sweat and toil, yea many of them shed their dearest blood, and were burned to ashes for those great privileges we are in danger of losing; 'at length a wall was raised, to wit, the laws against Popery were established; but the Merchant with the rest of the Popish advocates want to make a breach in the wall; nay, they have already made it; the beasts of prey have entered the gospel-field, and are as fast as possible destroying the tender grapes. I know several people have been turned from the Church of England, and are now sucking in the poison of the Church of Rome. Up, then, ye sons of Freedom, build up the broken walls of Jerusalem; come forth to the battle of the Lord against the mighty foe; the laws of your country are on your side; hark, don't you hear the cry  
already

already gone forth from the scarlet Whore, turn or burn? How were the young men tortured the other day for not bowing down to a Popish idol! Enough to make one tremble at the thought of Popery. Remember the female Protestant Champion, big with child, committed to the flames! see the infant burst from her womb! behold the bloody Papist, sticking it upon the point of his halbert. and in a triumph more cruel than that of hell itself, crying out, *Behold the child of an Heretic*, and then tossed it into the devouring flames! Oh England, England, cry to your God night and day, Up ye champions of the Gospel, make the Churches ring wherever ye go; cry aloud and spare not, lift up your voices like trumpets; shew the people the damnable errors of Rome. Remember what the great prophet Isaiah says, Behold I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, that shall never hold their peace day or night. This is a night of darkness, yea, of Popish darkness, How many thousands of Jesuits, driven out of their own country, have taken shelter here? and your new Correspondent, the Merchant, appears to be one; let him be ashamed, and never more dare to set pen to paper, as an advocate for Popery. I hope he will always find some honest Protestant to oppose him. Much more might be said upon this head, but considering myself only a babe in this great work, I conclude with hoping some able hand will undertake to defend the Protestant cause, and in the mean time I beg leave to subscribe myself, Mr. Printer, your humble servant,

July 24, 1766.

YOUNG ANTI-PAPISTA.

*To prove that Anti-papists and the Trader's Reasons for prosecuting Papists, will equally support them in the Prosecution of Protestants, and that their Principles lead them to Hostility against almost all Christian Sects on Earth.*

## DISCOURSE I.

**I** MUST now introduce my Reader to a Club, composed of men of great humanity, candour, and of an inquisitive temper, whose enquiries are after truth, and who are always pleased to meet it. It is on the evening of the 26th of July. we take our seats there, and the hour of debate approaches. They had an eye to the dispute carried on in the Ledger, and thought it of importance to Freedom and Knowledge. They had just read the three fore-going Letters in the Ledger of the day, against the Merchant's moderate Address. They see in each of them different degrees of wrath and hostility to Papists. In that of young Anti-papist, they re-collect all the deadly symptoms of the genuine puritan spirit; the cant, the sanctified malevolence, the prowling Enthusiast, the perversion of sense, and the dark suggestion that instils poison into the imagination, and moves it to cruelty, far beyond the extent of the expression: they immediately conceived the fearful purposes to which he led the mind, they knew *what ought to be done to beasts of prey, who enter the enclosure to destroy the tender grapes*; they well understood the call *to the battle of the Lord against the mighty foe*, and they comprehended the natural effect of the cry put into the mouth of the scarlet whore, and of the enraging image of the Protestant woman and her child, painted to the imagination in such torturing and agonizing colours; they perfectly conceived the whole drift and end of lashing up the mind with such terrible, frightful, and vengeful chimeras. They were no less aware of the covered menace that runs thro' the Trader and Anti-papist's Letters. Thus were their thoughts employed, when a Gentleman, whose name in the Journal of our Debates is *Publius* got up. and made the following Speech.

"Mr. President, in this paper you see three Advocates

eates for prosecution, of different characters; *Anti-papista* pleads against Toleration of Papists, because they persecute, but he disclaims any other objection to the indulging them in their Religion, and appears willing to deal tenderly with the consciences of men. *A Trader*, but not in Conscience, is somewhat warmer, tho' he declares for the right of mankind to exercise their reason in all religious matters, yet he seems to confine this freedom to their own secret thoughts, which indeed are cognizable no where on this earth; for he is decisive, that Papists, if they disquiet the consciences of others, especially the Members of the national Church, ought to be hanged, and hopes they will. As for young *Anti-papista*, he has saved me the trouble of proving that Protestants may very devoutly persecute; and that Popish nations have some reason to dread the growth of the Reformation."

It is pretty obvious, that the Trader, furnished with no other principles of persecution than he has at present, if he were a Papist, and had authority sufficient in Luther's and Calvin's days, would hang them both up without ceremony; not because he is an enemy to Freedom of Conscience, so far as it related to themselves, but for disquieting the conscience of others, and those the Members of the national Church, which they manifestly did. It is equally certain, that on the same principle, he would now string up without scruple, every Methodist and Presbyterian Preacher in England, for they disquiet the conscience of the Members of the national Church; and there are but few men in England, who entertain a real doubt, that they would seize upon the Government, and alter it, if they had power. I will make it equally plain, that humane *Anti-papista*, would on his principles, prosecute almost the human race, and particularly go near to depopulate the freest Protestant nations, in every part of the earth.

Mens principles are learned from their doctrines and practice; the writings, as well as the conduct of Calvin, Knox, and other puritan Preachers, demonstrate them to be sanguine persecutors; but there is no need of turning over books to learn that the Puritans do not tolerate; every body who reads a News-paper, knows, that



that at this day our colonies in North-America passionately refuse to admit a Bishop amongst them, for the use of their Brethren of the Church of England, and, in some places, even of a Clergyman of that communion; and also, that there are many people on this side the water, who approve of their opposition, and defend the zeal of their American Brethren.

It is certain on the other hand, that Papists say, and are ready to swear, that they are no enemies to the present Government, and deny persecution to be a principle of their Church. Who now are to be judges of their veracity? Undoubtedly, those who are always, and in all places, judges in that case, the legal governors, who are the guardians of the state; and to their decision, the governed, right or wrong, must acquiesce: so that, every government upon earth, who judge that a dissenting Religion is dangerous and hostile to the Church and State, according to those two Gentlemen, have a right to deny it toleration. But, say they, you mistake the whole matter, Protestants do not persecute by principle as Papists do; but listen to Papists, and they will solemnly declare to you, that they do not persecute by principle, that there is no such thing as a persecuting principle in their Church. and they will defy their accusers to shew it, thro' all their creeds and expositions of Faith. *We only prosecute, say they, men who are enemies to us for being Papists, and dangerous to our civil constitutions, who, the moment they acquire sufficient power, persecute us for our Religion without necessity, and slander us to give a pretence for the oppression.* Thus, both Protestants and Papists have their own opinions, that they prosecute only for self-defence, and give exactly the same reasons for their conduct.

In this case, the Protestant appeals to facts. He runs over the attempts of Popes to dethrone Kings, and proves Persecution, for Religion-sake, on Catholics so clearly, that there is no denying it. The Catholic in like manner appeals to facts; he produces to view religious Rebellions, and Monarchs dethroned by Protestants for Religion-sake: and he not only proves the oppression of Catholics by Protestants, but because they will deny that to be a Persecution for Conscience, he will demonstrate

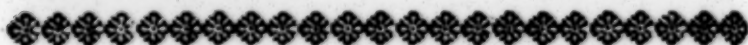
strate the Persecution of Protestants by Protestants, in England, Holland, Geneva, Sweden, Denmark, and Scotland; " Now if your superior enmity to Catholics be taken into consideration, *says the Papist*, with what face can you pretend, while you persecute and plague one another, that your oppression and prosecution of us Catholics, is wholly free from hatred and malevolence for our Religion-sake? As for the pretence that you do not persecute on Principle, it is rather an aggravation, and a cause of perpetual caution; for if I am to be aggrieved for my Religion, it is no alleviation to me, that your external Professions do not agree with your Practice: it is equal cause of Terror to me, providing it be out of all Doubt that I am to be injured; and since you have so universally persecuted one another, you certainly will not tolerate me; and it would be betraying myself with my eyes open, to trust to your Principle, which cannot be depended on amongst yourselves." Thus the Papists, having made observations the most obvious, on the very general spirit of Persecution amongst Protestants, give the very same Reasons for the non-toleration of Protestants in Popish Countries, that Antipapists and the Trader give for the prosecution of Papists here in this, that is, *that Protestants persecute Papists*, and they put it out of the power of Protestants, ever to prove that their oppression of Catholics is void of the spirit of Malevolence and Persecution, because, it will always appear incredible, that they use Papists with more candour, than they use one another.

Now let me ask the equitable and humane Antipapist, in the midst of his honest Exclamations against Persecution and Oppression, what is his judgment of the Calvinists of Geneva, whose wholesome severities, as they boast, have kept them clear of Schisms and Divisions; or of our own Colonies, who will not admit among them the Ministry necessary for the Church of England? I would fain know his sentiments of Knox and his followers, who propagated the Gospel with Fire and Sword; of the Synod of Dort, and the Persecutions it brought on in Holland; and of the strictness in Sweden and Denmark, in either of which Countries, a Protestant of the Church of this Kingdom, would probably

bly find himself more uneasy, than in Rome or Lisbon. But he has condemned them already ; for with him, a Protestant who assumes the power of judging for Conscience-sake, is a most execrable character, nor does he think such a person has a better right to toleration than a Papist. Here, then, Anti-papista decides that the majority of the Protestants in Europe, ought not to be tolerated in a different Protestant community, and that hardly any of them ought to be tolerated by Papists, to whom they are undoubtedly greater enemies than to one another. But if Anti-papista did not intend these effects from his Principle, and would single out the Papists for objects of resentment and punishment alone, it is certain that he is partial, and inequitable.

I will finish what I have to say on this head with observing, that none of the penal-Laws were made against the Papists, or their Forefathers, on account of any supposed Principle amongst them of non-toleration ; but as the Gentleman, who signs himself *No Smotherer*, observes, in the Ledger of March 8, for Civil Disaffection and Disloyalty, as the several Acts of Parliament expressly declare. Let Anti-papista then recollect his own natural Candour without prejudice, and say, whether it is not to the last degree prevaricating, and ingeniously tyrannous, to plead to put penal Laws in force against people, who are not guilty of the crimes which those Laws were calculated to suppress, for an imputed evil Principle, which is not rendered punishable by any Law in being, and which the people who are charged with, unanimously deny ? There may be two reasons assigned, why Catholics are not obnoxious to the Laws for a Principle of Non-toleration, or Persecution ; first, because such a Principle can never be proved personally on people who deny it, and do not practise it ; secondly, because such a Prosecution must be deemed unnecessary, by every Protestant who has an affiance on his own Principles, or a knowledge of human Nature ; for when you persuade a Papist that his Religion is erroneous and uncharitable, and that the Protestant Religion is genuine Christianity, you infallibly make a conquest of his Principles ; now, Punishment or Prosecution, is the worst argument you can use, to convince a man you are right,  
and

and a brotherly charity to him even in his Errors, the best. I speak particularly to Anti-papists, from whose professions I have reason to expect a candid and manly answer : as for the Trader, if I understand him, he is an open enemy to a free enquiry, and to the examination of Reason. What I said of other Churches, requires an observation, which even the enemies of the Church of England must allow to be true ; it is, that a spirit of forbearance and meekness has been her general character, and that instead of appearing forward to persecute, her fate has been to be persecuted at home and abroad, in her own dominions.



*To prove that Papists have no principle of Persecution in their Church.*

## DISCOURSE II.

MR. PRESIDENT,

**I**N my last discourse, which is calculated to beat down the monster Persecution, whatever shape it puts on, I observed that Anti-papists and the Trader's principle, was equally hostile to several of the Reformed Churches, as to Popery. The consequence of which must be, that those who like to suppress a different Communion, and have acquired a power to make laws against the growth thereof, will always justify the religious prosecution by this principle, in exactly the same manner these gentlemen have justified the suppression of Popery. And therefore, that it is really a general principle of persecution. In that discourse, I said, that Roman Catholics deny a principle of persecution. Now, I will examine with as much impartiality as possible, the merits and plea on which they make that denial, to shew that they disavow it in the same sense, and with the same kind of colouring that Protestants do.

A person who forms his ideas of an unpopular religion, from the exclamations and epithets with which the imaginations of the vulgar are impressed, will be always unjust and partial, whether he intends it or no. There are few Protestants in England, who make the least doubt



doubt that it is a religious principle of Popery to persecute Heretics capitally, and punish them for their religion with death, or corporal pains; yet it is a certain truth, that by a decision universally acknowledged and obeyed in that Church, her powers of persecution are very limited, and she is expressly forbid by her own laws, to inflict any corporal punishment even on convict Heretics, and on that, or any pretence whatsoever, to touch life or limb. It is in consequence of a custom founded on the Popish Canons, that Bishops always retire from the trial of a Peer.

I will take the legal conduct of the Popish Church to Heretics from Collier's Ecclesiastical History, preferable to the account of Popish Writers, because he is an unexceptionable witness to Protestants.

“ The antient Fathers — thought methods of extremity, were by no means agreeable to the Christian institution. *non est Religionis, Religionem Cogere.* Misbelief in Religion, was no forfeiture of Life by the Doctrine of the primitive Christians: 'twas their Persuasion, to let the Tares alone till the Harvest is come. Thus St. Martin and St. Ambrose refused to communicate with those who moved for the Execution of the heretic Priscillian. — Baronius himself owns, that a great part of the Catholic Bishops, contemporary with St. Ambrose, declined the communion of Ithacius and his party, for their persecuting the Priscillianists. They looked upon them as men of an over-vindictive and sanguinary temper, and that they had renounced the lenity and good-nature required in Christian Bishops.”

In England, the antient punishment for Heresy, was no other than the usual ecclesiastical censures of Excommunication, unless the Bishop found the case of a very dangerous nature and tendency, and then he might petition the secular Power for a commission to confine the Heretic, which he could not do by Church authority. We have in Collier's Preface to his second Volume of Ecclesiastical History, to which I refer my Reader, a Licence from King Edward III. to the Bishop of London, for imprisoning an Heretic, from which it appears, that it was not the custom of the Church to go to extremities

tremities with Heretics, to move for capital punishment, and deliver them over to fire and faggot. The common method in the spiritual Courts was, to carry their discipline no farther than imprisonment. When any person was convicted of Heresy, the Bishop petitioned the Crown for leave to confine the criminal in the prison of the Diocese; which it seems the Ordinary could not have done without such an authority. This imprisonment was to continue during life, unless the person renounced his Heterodoxy; in which case, he was *reatus in curia*, and restored to his liberty. Collier, Pref. to Vol. II. Eccles. Hist.

The burning of men for Heresy in England, was merely a Law of the secular Power, as the establishment of the Inquisition is, at this day, in Spain and Portugal: and the occasions of that Law, appear very conspicuous in English History.

When the Lollards and other Dissenters of their times, were left to the judgment of the Church, they were dealt with very mildly. *Wickliff's* sentence by *Courtney* Bishop of London, and after, by a synod at Lambeth, was only *Silence*; and he after lived and died undisturbed, at his Parish of *Lutterworth* in *Leicestershire*. The treatment of *Aylston*, *Swindurbury*, *Dr. Rigge*, Chancellor of Oxford, *Rapingdon*, *Hereford*, and other remarkable Heretics of those days, after conviction, was equally moderate and gentle. In fact, it was the lenity and seeming inefficacy of the ecclesiastical proceedings, that put the state upon more violent measures, not only in England, but in other nations.

These novelists pretended only to aim at an ease in conscience, and no doubt, if they had confined their views and attempts to spiritual matters, they might have always enjoyed the same lenity; but they soon menaced and shook the civil Power, and the civil Power made sanguinary laws against them in its own defence.

Doctor *Heylin*, in his animadversions on *Fuller's* Church History, says *Wickliff's* opinions were contrary to peace and civil order. — He (*Wickliff*) declared against the lawfulness of Oaths, required an exact probity to give a title to Property and Power. He affirmed,

firmed, that an ill man forfeits his right to Dominion ; and that as long as a Prince continues in mortal sin, his Prerogative is lost. Here, under the cover of Religion, the most dazzling temptations and unbounded views are laid open to the Populace, and to such of their Leaders as think it worth while, for the Dominion and Power of this World, to wear the mask of Sanctity.

Such Doctrines had their natural Effects. The rebellion of Jack Straw and Wat Tyler, was fomented by one John Ball a Priest, who adhered to several of Wick-cliff's Tenets. And where the Lollards preached, their Followers of the better kind, amongst whom are reckoned, Sir *Thomas Latimer*, Sir *John Trussel*, Sir *Lodowick Clifford*, Sir *John Peche*, Sir *Richard Story*, Sir *Reginald Hilton*, and many others, were accustomed to appear in a military figure, and instead of shaking the dust off their feet against those who refused to hear them, they brandished their swords and tongues against those they could not proselyte, and wounded them in body and credit. And indeed this is the uniform effect, when the Saints challenge to themselves an exclusive title to the sovereignty of this world, that the holy Candidates will passionately plead, that the rest of mankind are ungodly, and consequently have no title to Power or Possession.

This kind of procedure obliged the Houses of Lords and Commons to complain to the King, against the Novelists. At length, in the reign of *Henry IV.* in a Parliament, that curtailed the power of the Pope in England, was made the famous Statute against the Lollards, by which they were doomed to the Stake. In the preamble to the Act, is set forth, amongst other charges, that they excite and stir people to sedition and insurrection, and make great strife and division amongst the people. Their rebellious tumults being continued under Sir John Oldcastle and others, a second Act passed against them in the reign of *Henry V.* in which they are charged with insurrections, and a design to subvert and destroy all the Estates of the Realm, spiritual and temporal. From this Act I will quote a few lines, which shew the part the Ecclesiastics bore, in the process and  

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execution of that furious Law that consigned Heretics to the stake.

“ And forasmuch as the cognizance of Heresy, Errors, and Lollardries, belong to the Judges of Holy Church, and not to secular Judges: such Persons indicted, shall be delivered to the Ordinaries of the Places, or to their Commissaries, &c. to be acquitted or convicted by the Laws of holy Church.” From whence Catholics infer, that Bishops in the trial of Heretics, only act a part, which they always acted by their office; that they delivered the Heretic convicted to the secular Power, where their jurisdiction ends; that they do but their duty; that they always desire the secular Power not to proceed to extremities, and that they have no part or hand in the sanguinary punishment of convicted Heretics that follows.

This conclusion is universally disputed by Protestants: the objection to it I will recite from Collier, who lies before me. “ This endeavour to excuse Roman Clergy, from being concerned in the burning of Heretics, is weak and trifling: for, when the Inquisition or Ordinary delivers a Heretic convicted to the secular Magistrate, the execution follows as certainly, as it does from the sentence of a Judge, when he condemns a malefactor for felony. And therefore, to desire the Heretic may be gently used, is little better than jest and grimace: and signifies just as much, as if the judge should desire the Sheriff to use a man condemned for murder kindly, when he knows it is not in that Officer’s power to over-rule the sentence, and stop the execution of the Law.”

This certainly would be unanswerable, if the Secular Power had given to the Ecclesiastical Court its jurisdictions and functions, in like manner as it grants its commission to a secular Judge. But the cognizance and judgment of Heresy is understood by Ecclesiastics to be an indispensable and necessary part of their duty and jurisdiction, which it is no more in their power to resign or wave, than they can the character of Priesthood, That jurisdiction existed before any penal laws were enacted by the civil power against Heresy, and bears no manner of relation to those penal Laws; keep perfectly clear



clear of them in the process, and do not pass sentence of any corporal punishment, as the secular Judge does. Whether they think those Laws cruel or no, the Spiritual Court is, by its functions and rules of discipline, obliged to take cognizance of Heretics, and to adjudge them as Heathens and Publicans, unfit for the Communion of Christians.

Under this necessity, when the law for burning Heretics was made, what course had the Ecclesiastic Department to take? They could not strip themselves of their functions and duty, nor abrogate a discipline which they received as an Apostolic, and consequently Divine Institution. All they could do was, in every instance, to make a protestation against the law of the State, and to manifest that the burning of the unhappy victim is no Ordinance of theirs, but it is utterly disclaimed and discountenanced by them. Their request to the Civil Magistrate therefore is no grimace, but an express declaration of the extent of the Canon Law, and an authentic protestation that any punishment that extends to life or limb is not a law of the Church.

In order to conceive how far the Ecclesiastic Department may be deemed guilty of the executions that follow their verdict, let us take a view of other cases as similar to this, as the nature of things allow. Let us suppose a Law in force in a neighbouring Kingdom, no matter whether Popish or Protestant, by virtue of which the estate of a man, who quits the established Church for conscience-sake, is lost to his Heir, and becomes the property of the first Informer; that in consequence of a Bill of Discovery, the trial comes before a Jury, whether A. B. fell off from the Religion of the State, and died in the illegal Communion, and the clearest proof is made that the fact is so; the Jury may regret the cruelty of the Law, they may know with the greatest certainty that, upon their verdict in a point clearly and solidly proved, a Decree will be made, by which the natural Heir shall be stripped of his Father's Estate, in favour of an Informer, who gave no other value than becoming the Prosecutor; yet who will say that such a Jury, giving a verdict agreeable to truth, are guilty of

Persecution, or that the cruelty of the Law lies at their door?

The Inquisition, even in Rome, is an ordinance or appointment of the civil Power only, which appears by its not extending its jurisdiction beyond the Pope's territories, or being obtruded upon other Catholic States, as all the Laws of that Church are.

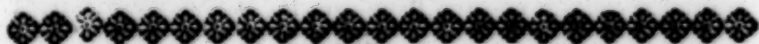
It has been offered, that the Ecclesiastical Judges may wink at the proofs of Heresy, and by a verdict below the evidence mitigate the sentence. But it is plain, that if the trial and judgment of Heresy, be their duty, a determination and judgment, agreeable to evidence, is equally their duty and indispensable: besides, that it is impossible by such indirect methods to elude the civil Power.

It is necessary to observe, that the Power of Excommunication does not arise from the pretence of Infallibility, seeing that those Protestant Churches, who are the greatest enemies to Infallibility, have claimed and exercised it under express quotations from the Scriptures. It is also carefully to be remarked, that the Popish Church pretends to practice her Jurisdiction, only where a new Heresy appears, or where it has not yet taken root. For when it is once established, Catholics cease to exert a Jurisdiction, and by their principles are obliged, in order to restore their Religion, to return to preaching, and sufferings: on which account, in Germany Catholics live in good neighbourhood with Protestants, in States where the Legislative Power is wholly Catholic; for the end of exercising this Jurisdiction being chiefly to point out to the faithful whom they are to avoid as Heretics, when once Heresy is established, and sufficiently pointed out by actual and continued separation, the necessity of exercising this Jurisdiction seems to cease.

If I be asked after all, whether or no some Popish Ecclesiastics have stretched their jurisdiction, and in fact and truth been guilty of barbarous and illegal persecution, I acknowledge candidly, *I believe they have*. But always against principle, through a malevolence of disposition, a vindictive temper, or some other human motive, which will sometimes operate in spite of Religion and Precept, amongst the corrupt children of Adam.

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The conclusion I establish upon the whole is, that Papists have no principle of persecution in theory. But, on the contrary, an express avowed principle that forbids them to prosecute capitally, which they solemnly teach and publish.



*To prove, that it is a partial and unfair Judgment to place the Persecution of Queen Mary's Reign to religious Principle.*

### DISCOURSE III.

SIR,

**E**VERY body professes himself a lover of truth, yet a sincere lover of truth, who is just to an adverse party, and but exactly just to his own, is hardly to be found amongst the children of men. The Papists appear to have the common affections for their parents, their children, their relations, their country, the usual feelings of nature, compassion, gratitude, and friendship, so familiarly; and they are so like other men, that it would gradually be forgot that they ought to be singled out to detestation and hatred; and, in the course of things, it might possibly happen, that they would knead into the common social mass of the community, if there were not some peculiar badge of malignant distinction put upon them. Protestants do not distinguish Papists, as the Turks do Christians, by a particular coloured Turban upon the head; the opprobrious mask is set upon their minds, and they are branded with the most odious and horrid principle of Persecution; in order to make this appear, their accusers suppose that Papists in their conduct and opposition to Protestants, are utterly devoid of ambition; a brutal temper, anger, and revenge, and the effects of these mighty principles of human actions they concentrate, and charitably attribute the whole to religious principles. If a Papist, who receives a thousand affronts, betrays any marks of resentment; if a popish Cromwell, under the appellation of a Duke of Guise, covers his vile designs beneath the cloak of Religion, and pursues his ends with slaughter and deceit; all is attributed to the bloody principle

principle of Popery, without any abatement for the corruptions of human nature, whose ambition, cruelty, and revenge, have stained the earth with so many deluges of blood before the appearance of Popery.

Tho' I cannot wholly agree with Mr. Bayle, who seems willing to discard principle from the government of human actions, and I can have no doubt but men sometimes act from principle, yet I must agree with him, that we are always more sincere and warm to the passions, inasmuch, that when sufficient human motives and passions can be produced to account for the conduct of people, it is unphilosophic and rash to overlook these active and impelling springs of human nature, and impute the effects wholly to principle, which is always ambiguous, and generally languid.

What men would be, if they had disfurnished their breasts of the human passions, if wrapped up in a perfect calm and apathy, they glided along the fixed determined stream of principle, I don't know: but certain I am, that few of those Stoick Christians have appeared on the theatre of the world, and that those few have generally retired into a silent corner, and left the busy part of the scene for those who were agitated by the human passions.

In the struggle between religious parties, it is a thousand to one that religion is only a convenient mask, beneath which, ambition, avarice, hatred, anger, and revenge, are the dire motives that stimulate mankind. The declaimers on Mary's bloody reign seem to think, she and her ministry ought to have been born immaculate, and without gall; that she herself ought to have had no manner of feeling of the wrongs and indignities offered to her mother, or to herself without intermission, thro' the course of her life: they will indeed allow to Queen Elizabeth, of glorious memory, her fears, and her worldly motives; even to get new laws made to hang Popish priests; to make the saying of Prayers in their own way treason, and to behave in general severe to Catholics; but they expect you should believe, that her sister Mary was more than human, and had no sense of the injuries that persecuted her from her birth; or of the rebellions, plots, and attempts, against her life and crown;



crown; but that in her oppression of Protestants, she was stimulated by nothing but the calm, settled principle of her religion.

It is certain, that if Queen Mary had had no religion, or had been of a different Protestant communion from her reformed subjects, she had such keen motives of revenge and indignation against the party she persecuted, as monarchs seldom pass over. Her mother's story, and the disagreeable consequences to herself, are too well known to need a recital. She found in her brother's time, that the Liberty of Conscience asserted by Protestants, was only meant exclusively for themselves; she had a convincing proof in her own person, that they persecuted for conscience-sake. The same party, to which invariably she owed her troubles, contrived to set aside her succession to the crown; they opposed her way to it with arms, and when she got it, they took care to weave it with thorns. That it may not be suspected I overstrain the provocations she received, I will give them in Collier's words: "What could be more  
 "provoking to the Court, than to see the Queen's honour aspersed, their religion insulted, their Preachers shot at in the pulpit, and a lewd imposture played  
 "against the government? Had the Reformed been more smooth and inoffensive in their behaviour, had the eminent clergy of that party published an abhorrence of such unwarrantable methods, it is possible, some say, they might have met with gentler usage.  
 "— The misbehaviour of some people about this time seems to have soured the humour of the Court, and brought the Reformed under farther disfavour. For instance, one Edward Featherstone, alias Constable, counterfeited himself King Edward the Sixth: — he was seized, and confessed he had been importuned by a great many to undertake the imposture.  
 "— To this may be added a Letter sent to the Lord Treasurer, with another inclosed to the Queen, from Father Elstan, Warden of the Convent at Greenwich. He complains, that himself and Father Peyto were stoned by several persons, in their passage from London to Greenwich. — To give another instance of a lower kind, one Robert Mendrain,

“ of the parish of St. Giles in the Fields, shaved a  
 “ dog, in contempt of the Priett’s Tonsure. — These  
 “ instances of misbehaviour might very probably ruffle  
 “ the Court, and make the government more rugged  
 “ with the Reformed. For tho’ stretching the punish-  
 “ ment beyond the crime has nothing of justice, yet  
 “ Princes sometimes let loose their resentments on such  
 “ occasions. Their jealousy is apt to take the alarm.  
 “ They conclude, that those who profess the same re-  
 “ ligion, have the same aversions and desires ; and stand  
 “ ready to take the same liberty of practice: this is  
 “ wrong judging, but power and passion don’t always  
 “ distinguish: and thus a whole party sometimes suffer  
 “ for the faults of a few.”

Of two hundred seventy seven who suffered for religion in Mary’s reign, about two hundred were convicted by Bonner. This Bonner was taken out of a prison by Queen Mary, in which he had been confined, after being deprived of his Bishoprick by the party whom he now judged. It is allowed by my Author, that he was harshly used in Edward’s reign, and he appeared then, even under the character of a Delinquent, to be of a very warm and vindictive temper. It is notorious, that Catholics in the preceding reigns, received such provocations as usually inspire resentment. They were witnesses of the public rapine, and many felt private injuries ; they themselves suffered, and they saw their friends and relations in the Church reduced to beggary, and turned over to very hard usage. Shall we then be persuaded that those unintermitted provocations had no influence on the Queen, on the Bishops, or Individuals ; that they suffered the most stinging wrongs and abuse with such a degree of passive sanctity, as to have no prejudice or hatred left behind ? Shall we say, that principle only had a hand in their cruelties, while the common goading motives of human nature slept in the breasts — of Catholics alone of all mankind ? — Such a conclusion is unnatural, forced, and prejudiced.

While some gave a loose to their revenge, several other Popish Bishops, who were looked upon by their own party as the best catholics, not only behaved with  
 lenity.

lenity, but wholly forbore persecution. Neither Heath, Archbishop of York, nor Oglethorpe Bishop of Carlisle, proceeded to any severity upon the score of religion. The Bishops of Oxford, Gloucester, Worcester, and Hereford, stood off from persecution: and in several other Sees, there was very little prosecution: and in several other Sees, there was very little prosecution, tho' the warmest friends of the Reformation must allow, that several particular zealots amongst the Reformed of those days, committed some irritating extravagances, and insolences, such as assaulting Priests at their solemn devotions, trampling on Crosses, and abusing what the Papists held sacred.

Can it be doubted that Papists feel injuries like the rest of mankind, and are liable to anger or revenge? Perhaps few Courts armed with power ever forgave such affronts, insults, and rebellions as Queen Mary experienced. The majority of her Bishops, which is not unmutual, fell in with the spirit of the Court, with which their own private resentments conspired. These considerations are fully sufficient to account for the persecutions of the times without, or even in opposition to Principles: but it will be difficult to account for the moderation of the unpersecuting Bishops, who stemmed the torrent, even while they had fresh on their memory the rapine of the Church, but by the restraint of principle.

Alphonfus, a Spanish Franciscan Friar, Confessor to King Philip, preached vehemently against taking away people's lives for religion: he spent some satyrical expressions upon the Bishops for their severities: he said the Scriptures prescribed them quite different methods, taught them to instruct those in meekness who oppose them, and not hale them to execution, and burn them because they could believe no better.

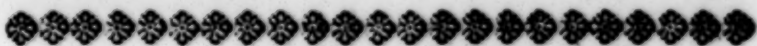
Finally, in the Synod held in her reign, for the re-establishment of Church-discipline, in which the canons against Heresy pertinent to the present case are recited and confirmed, and the powers of the Pope and Church asserted, there was no order, nor the least intimation given to the Bishops or parochial Clergy to persecute Heretics. This remark, Mr. Phillips acknowledges to

Dr. Burnet. Now, upon a fair view of facts, I believe no body will deny, that there were such provocations given to the Queen and her Ministry, as Courts never pass over without exemplary punishment; and that a persecution might naturally be expected, from vindictive tempers released from prisons and contumelies, and raised to government, whose ill humours were kept alive by perpetual plots, affronts, and rebellion, without recurring to religious principle; and that in this case it is equally unphilosophic and absurd, to account for the persecution by religious principle, as it is to recur to an occult quality to account for a natural effect, when you have a sufficient natural cause evidently appear before your eyes.

As the Massacre of Paris is usually joined by religious declaimers to the cruelties of Mary's reign, it is necessary I should take some notice of it: and indeed to lead you into the true causes of it, I need only pray you to follow the same clue, by which I unfolded the causes of the Persecutions in England. The Hugonot Writers all agree, that the Queen-Mother, who was the primary spring in that Massacre, was a woman of a subtle and cruel mind; that being controuled and resisted by the Protestants in her insatiable desire of power and rule, she had formed a settled resolution to destroy them. These Writers also affirm, that their party attempted to make their Sovereign a great and glorious King by abridging him of his authority, and stripping him of his prerogatives; they spoke just in the same strain their brethren in England did to King Charles the First, and took exactly the same steps. They made war upon the King's ill-advisers, fought many battles with him, fortified towns against him, delivered towns to foreign powers, as *Havre de Grace* to the English, and called in foreign troops against him out of Germany and else where, though they would not allow him to take a body of Swiss into his pay. The Massacre of Paris must therefore be attributed to the same causes with the Proscriptions of Sylla, of Antony, and Augustus; that is, to Ambition and Revenge, which are natural, universal motives in the bosom of human Nature,



ture, that have operated in the same manner through all nations and ages.



*To prove that the persecuting and sanguinary Laws in Popish Countries against Protestants are not owing to Religious Principle.*

#### DISCOURSE IV.

To the foregoing Discourse a Gentleman, whose public name is Portius, made the following objection.

MR. PRESIDENT,

**T**H<sup>O</sup> the massacre of Paris, and the Persecutions under Mary of England, as well as all the other temporary Popish persecutions that are distinguished by their uncommon fury, should be attributed to human passions and motives foreign to Religious Principle, yet, the Catholics stand by no means clear of a spirit of persecution, while the diabolical laws for burning Heretics, or for oppressing them, remain in force in Catholic Countries. The Gentleman who has undertaken to acquit them has, indeed, said something to exculpate the clergy of those Laws: but this is only laying heavy on the Laity what he has taken off the Clergy; as if the Laity in Popish Countries were not Papists as well as the Clergy, and equally subject to the Religious Popish Laws and Principles. I will ask him if they be not the truest people on earth to principle? and if it be not evident, that the Laity at least persecute with the connivance of the Clergy? It is immaterial to the convict Heretic, whether it be a Popish Sheriff, or a Popish Prelate who orders his faggot to be lighted; it is still equally a Popish Persecution, which is all I contend for.

When he had finished, Publius stood up and spoke to the following Purpose.

MR. PRESIDENT, It is impossible those sanguinary Laws can have the connivance of the Church, because the Church has not the least authority or jurisdiction in the

the case; and where there is no authority, there can be no connivance. The Church in Popish Countries is kept distinct from the State, and having declared and taught solemnly that the Civil Government of Kingdoms and Commonwealths is immediately dependent on God, and responsible to him only; by doing so, has cut off all pretence or claim to oppose the laws enacted by the Civil Power for its own temporal Preservation, otherwise than by admonition and declaration; exactly conformable to the Theory, is the Practice of the Catholic Church: It disapproves of persecution, and it is out of all doubt or dispute that it makes a perpetual declaration thereof, and, in every instance, condemns and disavows the capital punishment of Heretics; but it can proceed no further, without transgressing the bounds of its commission. The disregard of the Civil Government to the Church in mere temporals, and the passive conduct of the Church in the temporal measures which it condemns, are very conspicuous in wars, in alliances made for conquest, and in breaches of concord and peace: the Church incessantly preaches the doctrine of the gospel, and presses the obligations of charity, of peace, and forbearance; the State listens and acquiesces to the doctrine, but without taking the least notice of it in practice. Christian Nations go to war, break leagues, invade their neighbours dominions, and lay provinces waste, just as if they had never heard of the gospel.

I find the ingenious Gentleman who makes the objection, confounds the two authorities which Catholics keep distinct. When Ecclesiastics pretend to supremacy, then he imagines they must enthral the State, tho' it be evident as fact can make it, that Popish Kings are Arbitrary in the Civil Government: and now, when the Church does not controul or resist the State in its punishing of Heretics capitally, he thinks the Church does not its duty, and connives at persecution. Both these opposite conclusions arise from the same mistake, viz. a confused and wrong idea of the powers the Catholic Church assumes and practices.

Let us now consider the motives of Catholic States, for the singular Laws: for if they be peculiar to

Papists, and there appear not such universal reasons for them, as in parallel cases draw on persecution in all other States, Heathen and Protestant, as well as Catholic, then it must be acknowledged candidly, that the cruelty lies at the doors of Catholic Legislators.

In order to make an equitable judgement on this head, I must pray you, Mr. President, to recollect that Anabaptists were burnt in England in Queen Elizabeth's Reign. and that several of them were hanged in Geneva. There were also some very severe proceedings in Holland subsequent to the synod of Dort. The criminals in these cases, were men who quitted Popery, and took the Scriptures for their guide; that is, they were strictly Protestants in principle, and were entitled to toleration, at least in a Protestant Community, if their tenets were not adjudged dangerous to Government, which indeed was the criminating part of the charge. The Anabaptists have since quitted those seditious principles. and accordingly the Government has taken them into protection, like other peaceable subjects. I will not here offer to judge, whether those Protestant States had a right by the original prerogatives of Government to persecute Anabaptists to death; it is certain they were assured they had such a right, and that they thought the Anabaptist Principles inconsistent with the safety of the State; and it is also certain, that the Anabaptists of those days died asserting and glorying in, the principles which rendered them noxious to the Government. This power of persecuting them, was not assumed by Protestant States in consequence of a persecuting principle in the Protestant Religion, but in consequence of their Civil Authority, and of the tuition of the Commonwealth which lay in their hands: and this idea of the power of the Civil Government, did not originally spring from Popery, for it was the common sense of Nations before the existence of any Christian State. The Roman Empire, the native home of Philosophy and Candour, persecuted Christians violently on very slight suggestions and apprehensions of sedition from them. Equity, and every principle of fair reasoning requires of us, to attribute the same kind of Laws, and the same measures in Popish States,

to the same principle and guardian duty in the Governors and Legislators, providing an equal cause appears; and not to their Religious Principles, which disavow those Laws.

We have already seen how the Statute came to be made in England against the Lollards; they taught that the Magistrate by sin forfeited his prerogative, and they zealously reduced this tenet to practice. They struggled with the Government, and had like to have overthrown it; their Rebellion appeared not to be fortuitous, but of a settled determined complexion; they affrighted the Legislature, and the Legislature enacted this terrible Statute like people in a fright. I must observe, that altho' the Law was over-rigorous, yet those who suffered by it were not guiltless: what then does Fox mean by dubbing them Martyrs, but to declare that they died in a good cause, that Dominion is founded in grace, and to fortify men hereafter in Religious Treason?

In Germany Ziska's conduct and parts performed what Sir John Oldcastle's was unequal to in England. Such another hero to succeed him, and tread in the same path, would have founded in the West a military Religion that was to be planted by the sword, and to beat down the empires of the earth, as Mahomet and the Caliphs did in the East: but Ziska shone a comet alone; and after his death his party sunk into obscurity.

I have already said something of the Hugonots of France. Their own writers boast that they controverted the King's title to absolute sovereignty, and fought with evil Counsellors. They flew to arms from time to time, and carried on doubtful and obstinate wars against the Government. *Peter Martyr* says, that the faithful possessed themselves of the Churches, and that if the Bishops require them to be restored, seditions and slaughters are to be feared. *Osiander* says, the Protestants came armed to the King's Palace, under colour of exhibiting a confession of faith. *Besa* was present at the battle of *Dreux*, and animated the rebels by his entreaties and example. *Peter Carpentarius* acknowledges the treasons and slaughters committed by the Calvinists in France, and reprehends them as authors of the



the massacres there. A Protestant Author I read lately, congratulates the Hugonots for their valour and good-sense, in asserting their religious liberties by the sword. Such a Man is out of the way of argument or conviction; but the impartial part of the world will easily discover, that if it be laid down as a maxim amongst men; that the faithful have a right to draw the sword against their Governors for Religion, then must ensue perpetual incurable rebellion and persecution, until every Dissenter in the State be extirpated. For every sincere Believer, of every Sect, having the highest conviction that he himself and his party are the true Believers, has, upon this maxim, an undoubted right to draw his sword in defence of the Truth; and Civil Governments, which always assume to themselves a right to prevent dangers that threaten the State, will suffer no Sect who hold that militant Doctrine to grow up to strength sufficient to take the field against themselves; whence, on the side of the Dissenter, must ensue a principle of eternal warfare and rebellion; and on the part of the Government, eternal persecution.

Let us be more particular in the tenets of the chief foreign Reformers that menace Civil-Government. The Hussites in Germany took up the Lollard-Principle, that obedience was not due to Magistrates or Ecclesiastics in a State of sin; accordingly they broke into open rebellion, and ravaged Germany in the cause of the Lord for many years. The insurrections of the Lutherans in Germany were defended by the Divines of Magdeburg. Sleydan L. 22. fol. 354. says; if it happens that the Civil Magistrate pass the bounds of his authority, and command any thing that is wicked, he should not only be disobeyed, but if he attempt any force, he should be resisted. And seeing the case stands thus, there can be no rebellion, of right, objected to us. A little farther he adds of the Lutheran Rebels who were slain in the Civil War, that they died in an honest, godly cause, and for the Glory of God's Holy Name.

Calvin expressly teaches, that earthly Princes abdicate their authority, when they erect themselves against God; nay,

may, that they are unworthy to be accounted amongst men, and that we ought rather to spit in their faces than obey them. Calvin, in Dan. chap. vi. ver. 22, 25. and he openly concurs with Knox, in the practice as well as the theory of this principle.

Zwinglius teaches, that wicked Princes may be deposed. *Zwin. Tom. 1. In explanatione articuli, 44. fol. 84.* And from the example of Manasses, he charges the people with guilt; who will not rise and punish their Kings, who oppress or contemn religion, *Lib. 4. Epistolarum Zwinglii & Oecolampadii Epist. Conbardo, Somio, & Symparto, &c. p. 868, 869.* But then he advises, that this doctrine should be prudently and privately communicated to a few persons capable of great undertakings.

It is universally known, that Knox carried on the Reformation in Scotland, by a settled scheme of sedition, popular outrage, and treason. In his admonition to England against Queen Mary, calculated to move her subjects to rebellion, he calls her a Traitoress to the Nation. In his second blast of the Trumpet, as he calls it, which was not finished when Queen Mary died, he asserts, that Oaths and Promises bind not people, who have subjected themselves to Christ Jesus and his blessed Evangel, to obey and maintain tyrants against God, and against his truth known, and that they may justly depose and punish such tyrants. When Queen Mary of Scotland was taken by the Protestant Association, and sent prisoner to Lochleven, he, and others of his brethren preached furiously out of the pulpit for her execution. He maintained at an Assembly of the Church in Edinburgh, that God armed subjects against their natural King, and commanded them to take vengeance upon him according to his law; and that God's people executing God's law against the King, should have no farther regard to him in that behalf, than if he had been the most simple subject in the realm.

Goodman wrote a treatise in Geneva, to excite the people of England to rise against the government in which he justifies the attempts of those who suffered for Rebellion. He calls their treason a duty, and asserts that they are in Heaven as a reward for it. Calvin and

Beza

Beza praise and encourage the doctrine and behaviour of those public incendiaries.

The tenets I have mentioned were all calculated for practice, and were put in execution with uncommon zeal. I have already taken notice of the behaviour of the Hussites and Lutherans in Germany, and of the Hugonots in France. The history of the growth of the Reformation in Scotland is the history of disloyalty, of licentiousness, brutal pride, avarice, and cruelty broke loose, under the disguise of religion. The murder of Cardinal Beaton was the first fruits of it. Fox, the Martyrologist says, his assassins were stirred up by the Lord to the murder. From this beginning, the good work went forward, till by reiterated rebellions, the sacking of Churches, demolition of Monasteries, and persecution of Bishops, the pure faith was settled all over Scotland. The Genevans, the Hollanders, the Swedes, the Danes, for the same holy cause deposed their monarchs. The sudden progress of these mighty revolutions, look like the tract of a torrent or storm that passed over Europe, and in its course laid level all human authority that opposed it. Let us now suppose a plain history of the rise and establishment of the Reformation were laid before a heathen King, and heathen Ministry, of much the same character in politics and jealousy of power with those we are acquainted with. Let us suppose this heathen Monarch, after surveying the rest of this disastrous epocha to sovereigns, had fixed upon the life and fate of the unfortunate Queen Mary of Scotland, as an object of melancholy more peculiarly interesting. Let us suppose his heathen subjects desirous of peace, and of the happiness it brings, had read over in the same faithful history, an exact delineation of the civil wars, devastations, ravages, violence, and change of property, that spread almost to every village in the greatest part of Europe, in consequence of the reformation. Do you think this King and people would not consider Calvin and Knox, or their disciples, as confederates against the peace and happiness of mankind, and provide against their followers, as they would against a plague or inundation, or any other

other calamity that threatened destruction and confusion to the world?

I do not take upon me to defend the severe maxims and cautions of government: my design is only to shew what they usually are; and I am convinced, that whoever considers not only the jealous spirit of absolute monarchies, but casts an attentive eye along the histories of the famous republics of the world, those of Athens and Rome; the professed *Enamoratos* of Liberty will find, that Popish government in their laws against the reformation, act as governments of every kind always do, when apprehensive of danger, be their religion what it will. If no one was found in old Rome to speak a word in behalf of Manlius, the guardian and saviour of the city, but he was devoted by every body to death, when it appeared, even but probable, that he intended to subvert the government; can it be expected, that those who openly profess it as a sacred and religious principle to resist the legislative power, will be tolerated? What strain of politics appear to us so unjust and tyrannous at the *Ostracism* of the *Greeks*, whereby men were banished their native country, for no crime but merely the ability of doing mischief to the public. Now, there can be no doubt, but all Monarchies have the same natural right, and the same attention to defend themselves, and repel the approaches of danger that Republics have.

I must beg of you once more to take particular notice, that I do not excuse or defend persecuting laws; I only say, they are agreeable to the rigid genius of civil government; but, at the same time, I think they are very cruel, unless real danger appears. We see the Anabaptists are, at this day, an harmless inoffensive people, worthy of the sanction of the laws. Sects lose by time their ferocity and spirit of violence. The Protestants of England, in general, condemn the furious principles of Calvinism; therefore the reformation, as it stands at present, is not answerable for the seditious principles of some of its sects. Protestants who live peaceably, and renounce the doctrine of resistance and spiritual war, are entitled to the protection of Popish governments, and their peaceable demeanor, together with



with a disavowal of external offensive resistance, are sufficient tests of their loyalty and subjection, because these form the highest tests subjects can give.

There is in these gospel rebellions an aggravating circumstance, arising from the nakedness of the prevarication. When men pretend to find scripture for insurrection and rebellion, it is evident, it is not liberty of conscience and truth they aim at, but liberty of construing the scriptures to defend ambition, violence, revenge, and the other corrupt passions of human nature: for whosoever discovers resistance, and a charter for establishing religion by arms in the gospel of peace, of suffering, and meekness, will undoubtedly find there also a warrant for every lust and licentiousness of the human heart.

I can think of nothing more apt to my purpose, than the following little abstract, which I have copied from Collier's Ecclesiastical History: "What can be more unaccountable, *says he*, than to rebel for that belief which damns rebellion? To honour God with the breach of his laws, and to serve him with the highest violation of faith and duty, is a blasphemous pretence. 'Tis to prescribe poison for preservative, and kill in the remedy. Besides, religion is never in danger of being lost: a man's faith by God's grace is impregnable against all assaults. Unless we throw it up, and betray it, all the force of men and devils cannot wrest it from us. The primitive Christians kept it upon the rack: *Neither nakedness, nor peril, nor sword, could separate them from the love of Christ.* What can be more contrary to religion, than to break thro' the divine establishment, fly in the face of authority and law, and lay kingdoms in blood and ashes? Those who suggest such flagitious courses, have generally some selfish design at the bottom. They would make the people tools for their ambition: their business is interest and power: and their false zeal is either to gratify their pride or their pocket."

This covert design is the reason, undoubtedly, of an inextricable confusion, which a plain man will find in the language of those Hugonots, and, indeed, of almost  
all

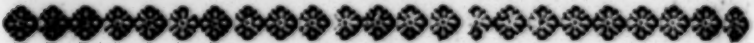
all Calvinists, which no one can understand without a key. The secret consists in making use of opposite epithets, and words of the most different import, in expressing the actions of their adversaries and their own; for instance, when they take up arms against their King and Country for the good Cause, which is a jumble of Liberty and of the Religion of the Seven Champions of Christendom, their efforts are just, noble, magnanimous, and Christian-like; but when they are repressed or punished for so doing, or an attempt is made to frustrate their designs, the resistance of their enemies is a barbarous and inhuman persecution of the Saints. Their first attack on Popery was generally by way of ridicule, which, at the same time that its proofs are slender, yet is very seducing to the common people, who lie open to a coarse jest, though they seldom enter deeply into the reason of things. This mountebank procedure they called zeal, and when the clergy of the party attacked opposed them, and exposed this ambiguous double-tongued test of Truth and Religion, and the mischievous imposing creatures who made use of it, then they changed their battery and fell to outrage: they set up the Papists as children of Belial, as Idolaters and Canaanites; that is, they proscribed them, under those characters that were devoted to destruction in the Old Testament, and stirred up their own followers zealously to fight the battles of the Lord. Now what is the meaning of this dialect? but a declaration that the Hugonots had a right to trample on Catholics, to render them objects of ridicule and detestation; and if the Catholics offered to make reprisals or a defence, then to take up arms, and to establish their religion and sovereign sway with a high hand. It amounts to a declaration, that Catholics had no right to power or defence; that they ought to acknowledge themselves Idolaters, and that their opposition to the Saints was an act of crying injustice and insolence: in short, their demeanour was the display of a principle which they openly asserted when they got power, viz. *that Dominion is founded on Grace*, that the Saints ought to bear rule in this world, and that the Gospel is the Charter of earthly power and possessions. If you change the name of Hugonot into Puritan,

and

and of Catholic into that of Protestant of the Church of England, the clue I have given you will equally serve to lay open the whole game of the great rebellion in England.

From what I have said it is plain, that it is the Capital and Essential principle of the Reformation, viz. *private interpretation* in the hands of bad and designing men that alarms Catholic States. 'Tis true, this principle seems to promise an universal toleration, and in the hands of a sincere Christian it will always do so, because he will consider that every man is equally intitled to it; and one would be apt to imagine, that a Person who takes his religion from the Gospel, will breathe only meekness, forbearance, subjection, and love; but this is one of those many principles, whose effects in practice are very different from what it promises in Theory. It is known that Calvin and Knox, and the nations who followed them, preached sedition and rebellion very piously out of the Scriptures; that they were never at a loss for a text to persecute; and that they overturned governments, and rent kingdoms, by the directions of the Gospel. The truth is, where the heart has made a league with corruption, it will corrupt every thing that comes in its way, and gather poison from the doctrines of Life. In a state of nature, perhaps neither Calvin nor Knox could persuade themselves or others, that Rebellion and Persecution were honest and defensible; but they came to the Scriptures with morose pride, avarice, and an ambition to rule; they read the divine oracles with a Bias, and clinched these corrupt passions by a wrested interpretation: and as the generality of men have the same desire of independence, and pride of persecuting the wicked, they thronged to those pleasing preachers, and got their passions clinched too with texts of Scripture. From the universal spirit of Insurrection and Persecution that sprung up along with the private judgment of the Scriptures, we may learn, that though they be life and spirit to man in a state of Grace, yet to a man in a corrupt state, who is proud, malicious, revengeful, and licentious, they put on a very different aspect. What I have said explicates the hitherto unaccountable Phænomenon, that Protestants  
who

who hold Liberty of Conscience, yet prosecute. When a man's private spirit convinces him that it is a Christian duty to extirpate the enemies of the Gospel, and to suffer no false worship in Israel, surely it is his own spirit, and his own conscience he is to trust to, and take for his guide, and not the interpretation of any body else. King Edward VI. when eagerly solicited to allow his sister Mary Liberty of Conscience, broke out into tears, and declared he was resolved to run the utmost hazards, rather than give way to so strange a permission.



*Some Reflections on the Evils of religious Prosecution.*

## DISCOURSE V.

MR. PRESIDENT,

**Y**OU are by this time pretty well satisfied that Antipapista's Principle, which is the most moderate prosecuting Principle I have seen, does not stop at Popery, but wages war with every established Protestant Church, that has enjoyed the power to refuse toleration; and that when once you let loose that un pitying Fiend, *Religious Prosecution*, you cannot set any bounds to it, or say "so far shalt thou ravage, and no farther, extirpate Popery, and there thy commission ends;" you may as well think of glutting Death or the Grave. You see then the danger of admitting a religious Prosecution into the spirit and frame of this generous and free Constitution, and that if Englishmen once hang up the religious sword over the head of any Sect for Intoleration, and do not wholly disclaim it, the Church established must, in any such reverse of fortune as she experienced under Cromwell, expect to see it hung over her own, by her own sectaries; for a pretence will not be wanting. The *real Well-wisher to Reformation*, in his Letter of April 12, has made up the charge against the Divines of the Church of England, the Bancrofts, the Lauds, the Neiles, and the Wrans as he calls them. And indeed there is no denying fact, the Church of England has been persecuted publicly by Protestants,  
and



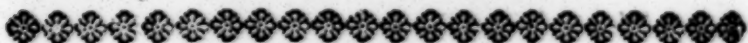
and is at this day denied a Residence amongst the sectaries of North America.

I might, from a variety of other topics, draw arguments against a religious Prosecution ; for indeed a volume might be wrote on the mischief it does to mankind. Mutual Forbearance and Charity humanize the roughest tempers ; they take away the mediums of resentment and hatred through which parties look at each other, and let them see, that the social virtues are not confined to any particular Party or Sect. Prejudices and averfions are kept up by injuries, and will settle down when you cease to stir them. Men have as natural a propensity to follow the cool dictates of reason in Religion, as in the other concerns of life, if they be suffered to do so ; but their tempers may be warmed into passion and zeal that bids defiance to Reason. Persecution on the side of Truth is a very dangerous expedient, because it naturally destroys its own ends, and, instead of conviction, gives men the impressions of horror and disgust ; on the other hand, there is a bewitching power in suffering for religion-sake that amazes Reason, and overwhelms its objections ; as if the mind had a consciousness that it is the part of true Religion to be prosecuted ; but when to Prosecution are added injustice and Falsehood, men think they have no longer any room to doubt on which side lies true Religion. The tract of argument that leads to the bottom of the dispute between Protestant and Papist is deep and dark, and few trace it so far ; but a love of God, superior to the love of this world, that supports men in their sufferings for religion-sake, is an argument understood by every body, and that persuades much more than it proves. It is also to be observed, that religious Prosecution never fails to create an illustrious severity of life in the sufferers : the very silence of a calm, but persevering religious man, opposed to the abuse and obloquy he undergoes from those who insult him by Law, has infinite eloquence and force.

A neighbouring Protestant nation, famous for unceasing religious prosecution, and for equal constancy and suffering, on the part of the Roman Catholics, affords an instance of the contrast I speak of and its effects:

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There is hardly a vice in the human heart, or a mundane temptation that is not pressed directly or indirectly into the Protestant service in that kingdom. Forfeitures, gabels, inabilities, and tyrannies of various kinds, are the ignominious supports of the Reformation there, against the growth of Popery. When a Protestant becomes a Papist, it is unlawful for so wicked a man to enjoy his own estate longer: that becomes the legal property of a Protestant Informer, without giving any other value or consideration but becoming the owner's first Prosecutor. A Papist is forbid to settle himself, his family, or posterity, for any longer term than thirty-one years, to wear a sword, or ride a good horse; brothers are tempted to rise against brothers, and sons against fathers; independence upon their parents is held out to disobedient children, and the power of purchases and informations to the avaritious; pride as well as avarice are set at war with Popery, and misery and poverty are chained to it by law. Against these vices, worldly motives and temptations that stand up for the Protestant cause, on the side of Popery appear the perseverance, the patience, and religious zeal that distinguished the first Christians. Every body knows the result of this opposition, the unparalleled constancy of the Papists in that kingdom. (for that unfortunate kingdom will be readily distinguished by the description of its infamy) is the admiration of all Europe; and those they loose are manifestly the converts of interest and vice.



*Papists are not enemies to Liberty.*

## DISCOURSE VI.

**T**HERE are few who have treated of human affairs, who have not complained of the tyranny of prejudice, yet the full extent of the tyranny of prejudice will never be known or suspected. Man received his reason from the hand of Nature, plainly to supply the Part that Instinct transacts in the Brute; but the Brute never mistakes the Ends of his Instincts; the difficulty then is, how Man comes so universally to be imposed

posed upon in the powers and extent of his reason, and to mistake prejudice for it? This is evidently not a wilful mistake, but a weakness in the very frame of the mind, which it often cannot perceive or amend.

How seldom do we suspect our own principles of judgement, during the whole course of our Lives? And how common is it, to be imposed upon by the greatest absurdities, without suspicion? Foreigners of reflection, upon their first coming into a strange country, see a frightful revolution in the manner of judging and thinking of the people; and a man of reading, who dips into the antient state of Literature, will make the same observation; but here lies the misfortune, that neither suspects that he himself is liable to the same censures and criticism; and that strangers to them will equally explode their systems and turn of reasoning. What seems most mortifying is, that maxims and fables the most extravagant, have had their seasons and ages of universal sway, in which the reason of all mankind have sunk under them in abject slavery and impotence, I was led into this train of reflections by a vulgar maxim which is universally believed, tho' nothing can be more absurd; it is, that Popery and slavery are inseparably connected, insomuch, that Papists, when they enjoy liberty, are apt to throw it away and desert it.

There is no prejudice without some foundation. Some time ago a Popish Prince in England assumed a power which the constitution did not allow him. This gave occasion to unite the ideas and terms, *Popery*, and *Slavery*; and as slavery is a state detestable to mankind, these terms have been kept joined together for the sake of rendering Papists odious. The Popish principle that afforded a colour for continuing the union is as follows: Papists believe the legislative authority, whether that resides in one, in a few, or in the many, to be absolute and supreme; and that subjects are bound to duty and obedience by conscience: for instance, in England they hold that obedience is due to King, Lords, and Commons; in France to the King only; and in Holland to the States: but this doctrine by no means excludes the most popular and republican term of Government: it is

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consistent with the Republics of Genoa and Venice, and with the Democracy of Athens, did it now exist.

No man can be an enemy to the present government of this Kingdom, who is not an enemy to human nature. Sacred Liberty is the poor man's riches; it is the prerogative which, in spite of his condition, keeps him above contempt, and makes his Being agreeable and of value. In the pursuit of this blessing, we feel ourselves borne up by a peculiar generosity and contempt of life; the secret cause of which, like light, by an intuition stronger than demonstration, convinces us that the worth and estimation of a man is connected with his freedom.

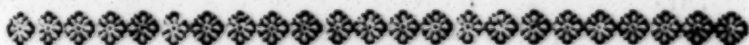
It is strange that any man should be so credulous, as to believe that Roman Catholics have lost the common feelings and sentiments of mankind, or that they chuse a state of slavery. It is as credible that they have lost their taste of sweet and bitter. A love of liberty is not acquired by custom, like a fondness for strong liquors, it is implanted by the hand of Nature that formed the laws of pleasure and pain, and can no more be lost, than the pleasures of vision or music. But if any body can be so far imposed on, as to think that Papists love or approve of slavery, I must beg of him to trace back the origin and growth of English liberty, and to see to whom that inestimable blessing is owing.

They were English Papists who gave liberty a being in this nation, like a creation, where it did not exist before. They were our Popish Ancestors who purchased it with their blood, and left the sacred legacy to their ungrateful children, who are unwilling to acknowledge the obligation. How many fields, in this Island, have been consecrated, in British story, by the noble efforts of Popish Patriots for freedom? And what blood have they generously shed to rescue their country from slavery? It is certain that, since the Reformation, the privileges of the people have made great advances, but liberty was actually gaining ground for ages before the Reformation, and it did not advance since, beyond the proportion in which it made its way the last two hundred years before. Protestants found the fair Basis reared to their hands; they found *Magna Charta* signed and sealed; they found the people represented in Parliament,



liament, and making laws by their representatives; and the return they make for so fair an inheritance is to deny the obligation, and to let the few Papists in Britain enjoy as little of the blessing they themselves purchased, as possible.

The appropriating the common passions of human nature to this or that party is unphilosophic and absurd. Kings have affected arbitrary power before James the Second was born, or before the name of Catholic was heard in the world; also before the word Protestant was known, men have loved liberty. In England, as I observed, Catholics rescued from fierce monarchs the liberties Protestants now boast of; and in Brandenburg and Denmark, Protestants have lost the freedom they had. The result I would establish is, that Papists are as fond of freedom as Protestants, and as capable of defending it with their lives; and that Protestants have ambition and lust of power as naturally as Catholics; in short, that those passions are common to mankind, and that to join Popery to Slavery, or arbitrary Power, is an outrage to truth, and a contradiction to experience, and to the history of the very nation we live in.



A Club I frequent fell last night upon the dispute carried on for some weeks past, in your Saturday's paper. How do you account for it (says a neighbour of mine, who sat next to me) that the Real Freethinker has not been hitherto answered? Not answered! replied I, (somewhat warmly) have you not read the several answers made to him from time to time in the Ledgers? Fair and softly, replied he, there have been letters published against him in the Ledger, but no answer, which I will make very clear to you presently, if you have patience to hear me.

The Real Freethinker, in his inquiry, attempts to prove, that Protestants, by insisting desperately on evident falsehoods, by calumnies, misrepresentations, and by prosecuting Papists for conscience sake, in direct opposition to their own principles, raise suspicions and

prejudices in sincere Christians against their integrity and religion, and give Papists great advantages over them; after several letters passed *pro* and *con*, he called publickly on his antagonists, to account for the growth and continuance of Popery in these kingdoms, against such prodigious odds as it has to struggle with in any other manner; and to shew, that this his explication was not natural or sufficient, they at length made an effort to come to the point; they did not hitherto, it is true, attempt to prove, that his explication is unnatural, or insufficient, but they offer some other causes by which they account for the growth and continuance of Popery.

The real Wellwisher to Reformation, in his last letter, thinks the prejudices of education alone, sufficient for the purpose. The prejudices of education are sufficient to account for the perseverance of those, who are not in the way of being undeceived, and also of a few mule-headed mortals; because amongst mankind, there are such as will stand immoveable in their prejudices against the efforts of reason and truth. But, at the same time, there are surely others who will listen, to reason, and yield to conviction; for if that was not the case, there would appear no difference between truth and falsehood; and there would be no such thing in reasoning as credibility or evidence; besides there will be a very numerous party of renegadoes, who will profess the religion of the state, on account of the advantages and fashion; so that the prejudices of education are by no means sufficient to account even for the continuance of Popery, without losing ground gradually and perpetually, when the powers of reason, and of worldly advantages, are thrown into the Protestant scale, where before the prejudice was equal on both sides.

A second cause the same Letter-writer has alledged for the growth of Popery is still more unfortunate. He insinuates, that in the neighbourhood of Catholic Mansion-houses, portions of money, meat, cloaths, cows, and other premiums, (as he calls the relief given by Christians to their fellow-creatures in want) are distributed among poor cottagers. In the same strain, a writer in the Ledger of Saturday before attributes the growth of Popery to the superior earnestness and indefatigable labour

labour of Popish Priests. Would not a person here imagine they had before their eyes the age of the Apostles, that they were describing the circumstances that gave occasion to the creation of Deacons, and that they were painting the labours and unwearied zeal of the first Preachers of Christianity?

But no causes that can be assigned for the growth or continuance of Popery, can refute the real Freethinker's reasonings, because, altho' other causes may exist, yet those he mentions, will, notwithstanding, produce their own proper and natural effects. Let us suppose it proved, that there are several currents and eddies that accelerate a ship in her course from the Canaries to America, yet the trade winds must be allowed their share in the voyage. In like manner, altho' other causes may concur to operate on the minds of men, who are resolved to postpone all earthly advantages for what appears to them the truth, yet it will always conduce to make a plain honest man distrust a neighbour, or a party, to find by experience that he or they are addicted to falsehood and slander, and habituated to act in opposition to their most sacred principles. On this simple and natural sentiment of moral virtue, he accounts for the falling away of some few sincere Protestants to Popery, and the steadfastness of Papists, notwithstanding the enormous odds Popery has to struggle with. Therefore those who undertake to prove, that the causes he produces have no effect, must not think of doing so, by asserting that there are other-collateral causes. In order to refute him, they must shew, that calumny, falsehood, and prevarication, when used by Protestants, have no effect in bringing disgrace on them; or they must prove, that the instances he produces of calumny, falsehood, and prevarication, never existed amongst Protestants and are mere figments invented by their enemies.

The moral sense of mankind, which will not bear an open insult on virtue, must forbid the Real Freethinker's antagonists to maintain in the face of the public, that slander and prevarications are not disgraceful; therefore the only and effectual manner of answering him, is to demonstrate, that the instances he produces

of calumny, falsehood, and prevarication, never existed amongst Protestants: and when the dispute comes to this issue, there is nothing wanting but a little candour and honesty to bring it to a clear decision; because the question terminates in matters of fact and of public notoriety.

I will ask you the following questions, which contain the principal allegations of the Real Freethinker, and I expect a direct answer to them. Does the story of Pope Joan appear notoriously false to every man of common sense who reads Blondel, Bayle's articles of Pope Joan and Polonus, Dr. Cave or, Mr. Burnet, who detected the forgery? Did Luther, Bucer and Melancthon, by a written approbation allow two wives at once to the Landgrave of Hesse? Did Cranmer's conscience most religiously conform itself to his monarch's lusts and cruelties? Was it opposite to all rules of justice and honesty to charge the Papists, on London column, with firing the City, and to prescribe them by an eternal monument, to the enmity and rancour of all future generations? Were the Catholics, who were impeached on account of Oates's plot, dealt with cruelty and partiality on their trials? Do the sciences flourish in Popish countries, and are Priests particularly the professors and dispensers of learning to the public? Do the Papists of England and Ireland believe and declare, as they do their other religious principles, that the Pope has no kind of temporal jurisdiction in these kingdoms? That the civil legislative power of Great Britain is supreme, and subject to no authority on earth? And that they themselves (the Papists) are bound in allegiance to their King, equally, whether he be of their religion or any other? Is this doctrine taught to their Priests in their course of divinity in their Colleges, and by them to the Laity? Are both Priests and People ready to take an Oath of Allegiance to his majesty King George, providing there be no speculative snares for their consciences left in it? Is the Pope believed by the people to be peccable and fallible; and do their writers in their lives and accounts of the Popes give indisputable evidence, that this is their fixed opinion? If the affirmative of these questions be true, then, indisputably the Real Freethinker is right,

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in asserting, that Protestants misrepresent the Catholic doctrines, and oppose Popery with calumnies and falsehoods; and every body who has a respect for truth, superior to his desire of oppressing his adversaries, right or wrong, ought to acknowledge it.

Some of these articles have not at all been denied in the letters written against the real Freethinker, and others of them have been denied, obliquely, and by insinuation. One Gentleman indeed in your Saturday's Paper of May the 10th, with courage untamed by conviction, still defends the history of Pope Joan, and like Æneas over his slaughtered friend, prefers death to the infamy of quitting the dear corpse. I will at present leave him in possession of his Tale. But what shall we say of those who are convinced of the falshood in this, and the other matters I spoke of just now, who yet persist in defending them, and are angry with every body who ingenuously discovers the truth? The Real Well-wisher to Reformation, calls the representation the Real Freethinker made of Luther, of Bucer, and Melancthon, a Paradox, tho' he only repeated what Bale and Basnage said before of them. In the Ledger of March 29, he says, "The facts he (the Real Freethinker) has mentioned in his fifth letter, are so well supported against Popish evasions, that they are not to be dealt with by the same sort of flimsy superficial colouring, which may do well enough with some sorts of readers, for the purpose of annihilating Pope Joan." If he and the other writers, who make use of such indirect arguments, believe as they speak, they certainly betray their cause by such an oblique and feeble defence; but if they believe the contrary, then they are guilty of prevarication and wilful seduction; and confirm by their act and deed, the chicanery laid to the charge of weak Protestants in the Enquiry. The circumspect and cautious conduct of those Gentlemen, put into plain English, amounts to the following declaration: "O ye vulgar, who have neither knowledge nor learning to examine things to the bottom, do you continue still to believe the history of Pope Joan, as you believe the Gospel and that all the arguments against it by Bayle, Blondel, Cave and Burnet, are flimsy and superficial; and be assured, that

whoever says that Luthur, Bucer, and Melancthon, gave leave to the Langrave of Hesse to marry two wives, or that Cranmer's conscience veered regularly with the King's lusts and cruelties, is a Papist and a misrepresenter of the first Reformers. But for you, ye learned. who know very well that those silly fibbs are indefensible, you see I do not, in direct terms, defend them; I have not offered a single argument in their support, which is a full testimony that I do not believe them myself, though I think them convenient and necessary for the crowd."

Those who have not looked into the nature and state of the arguments used on both sides may judge, that the Real Freethinker ought to have replied to his adversaries, or made a new defence of his first positions; but until there be answers, there can be no replies; for supposing these Gentlemen who went to answer him imagined, that their rhetorical flourishes, their exclamations and general vague accusations of Papists should be credited, like holy writ, do they therefore infer, that they have a right to misrepresent and slander Papists in those other particular instances, of which the Freethinker speaks? Because there are strong reasons to suspect a man has been a footpad on Kennington Common, does it follow that he shall be condemned for a murder committed in the Borough, without other proof? Surely nothing the Papists ever did, give a right to their enemies to expose them to the injuries and resentment of all future ages, for burning London, without evidence or conviction. It is, perhaps, as easy to trace the progress of the disorders of the mind as those of the body. Whether the monumental inscription was fixed up, because people sincerely believed the Papists were guilty, without any proof being made, or because they were desirous to propagate and inflame the odium and malevolence of the public against them, on either hand it is evident, the prejudices and infections of the mind were universal, and deeply rooted at this period; and the cruel effects of them appeared, at the same time, on the trials for Oates's Plot. I do not mean to charge the Jurors with wilful corruption; they probably were honest meaning men, and were fully persuaded

persuaded they were doing justice, when they shed the blood of the innocent. But was not the verdict they gave owing to their prejudices? These prejudices, and the spirit that formed those prosecutions, the Real Freethinker has attempted to remove, as being disgraceful to Protestants, in the eyes of all just men. For this purpose he has pointed out several misrepresentations and public calumnies that exist at this very day, and are the indubitable symptoms of the spirit of insincerity and prejudice; while some of these misrepresentations are wholly passed over unnoticed in the letters written against him, and others are not denied in direct terms: there certainly is no real answer made to him, and he retires out of the controversy without opposition. Here my friend ended his harangue, and waited my reply.

As I was not able to answer him, we agreed in the club, that I should write down his discourse, and send it to you for publication, not doubting but we and the other spectators of the contest might get a satisfactory answer to the Real Freethinker, from those Gentlemen who have undertaken to handle him. But let them take notice of the real points, and not turn to the right or the left. He has charged the several instances of prevarication, of slander, and calumny, which are connected with my friend's questions in this Letter, let them, in express words, which every plain reader may understand, be either affirmed or retracted. Let it be proved, that Papists have not been beset in the toils of prejudice and calumny in the instances he speaks of, or let the oppressions be candidly acknowledged, and placed to the disorders of the times.

I am, &c.

FAIR PLEA.



MR. PRESIDENT,

**Y**OU see, however mettlesome and spirited the Letter-writers on the other side of the question be, to cast abuse and kick about the puddle, yet you may as well whip and spur a marble statue, as attempt

to provoke them to a direct answer. The *Real Well-wisher to Reformation* may I think serve you for a copy of his brethren, and indeed he has gone the greatest lengths towards an answer; he has ventured to approach my questions so near, as to make retortions of something in kind; and after having made the grand tour in his letters, thro' the usual circle of scurrility, and of impotent attempts in favour of the prevarications in mode, he returns back exactly to the point from which the Freethinker sets out, and asserts with him, that the Reformation is not answerable for the errors and failings of Luther, Cranmer, or any other of its professors; but ought to stand, or fall, by its own evidence and truth.

This is a fair open declaration at length, and surely preferable to a round of prevarication, and an ambiguous shuffling defence continued as long as any disguise could be found. Let me add, that as honest upright Protestants are not answerable for the artifices and prevarications of others who call themselves by the same common denomination, in like manner, it is no injury to the upright, that those ignominious artifices of their disgraceful brethren be rejected; or that it be asserted publicly, that the Reformation ought to be propagated and defended with integrity and truth. No doubt, a Jurieu, a Spanheim, or Marelius, will take the alarm, and stand to their posts, the invincible champions of commodious and useful imposture; but the good and virtuous Protestant will look on them with indignation; he will quit such shameful company, and think himself no more concerned to assist them, than to stand at the bar along with pickpockets and thieves, who happen to be of his country or profession.

I would fain avoid repetition, but the propositions that are unanswered remain still to the credit side of the account, and must be carried forward when a sum of the arguments is made, and a balance struck. However, tho' I shall review some of the subjects I passed over the last evening, yet the tendency of my present discourse is new, and indeed the result of all that has been said on both sides of the dispute. I propose this night to enter into the views of the misrepresentations made of Popery; and



and of the system of beating Catholics with the enmity of the crowd, raised by the most criminal insincerities, instead of overwhelming them with truth. We have hitherto seen these chicaneries, like the members and wheels of a watch taken asunder, let us now put them together, and observe the joint scope and end of the whole.

The story of Pope Joan was a legend invented to ridicule the weakness of Pope John VIII. "It would not perhaps have been revived or charged by Protestants (says F. N. in the Ledger of March 15,) if the Roman Church had not boasted that the Popes were the immediate and regular successors of St. Peter." A Fable that conduced to make the Papacy appear contemptible, was not to be thrown away or neglected. But what is remarkable is, the wonderful obstinacy with which the Hugonots defended the fiction, after it appeared so to every man who had a sense of truth and honesty. Bayle has preserved in a note, part of a stunning Sermon preached by a Popish Ecclesiastic on that occasion; probably as an apology for himself and Blondel for deserting the tale. Blondel deserted it to avoid the charge of wilful perverse dishonesty, urged against the Reformed (in this instance) with great force. However prudent and upright his conduct was, the Reformed of France fell upon him with uncommon resentment as the betrayer of their cause, in proving the falsity of a story, which the interest of the Reformation required to be true. He felt the effects of that odious character of which he was desirous to free them; they aspersed him with being bribed by the Papists, and two Hugonot writers of learning laboured to restore the expiring fiction to credit.

In the very early days of the Reformation, a Revelation of the Revelations was published to the crowd, that the Pope of Rome is the Antichrist of that Prophecy. Those who took upon them to expound the Apocalypse in this manner, do not pretend to do so by an Inspiration made to themselves: there are many circumstances in the description of the Antichrist of the Scriptures that confound this Interpretation, and have not hitherto been reconciled to it even by the visionary imagination

gination of a dealer in Prophecies. The Interpretation I am speaking of is therefore no more than a begging of the question, and stands upon a kind of proof, that, in any other case, would be treated with the utmost contempt and ridicule. The Jewish Talmud is upon the same footing, and universally founded upon similitudes and fanciful applications, like those the Protestant Rabbies discover in the Texts they alledge. The Imposition of this their gloss, as a certainty, and their propagation of it in Sermons and Writings for a known truth, is, upon the very face of it, a shocking Calumny; for there is no axiom more self-evident, than that it is a Calumny, without even considering whether these Seers have interpreted right or no; because they who impose it as a Truth, do not know it to be true; and make up the deficiency of their certainty from their hearty animosity to the Pope: and it is shocking to all people who have a sense of Christianity, to hear the sanction of the Holy Ghost profanely prostituted to abet and witness for human malevolence. It is certain, tho' it be not usually taken notice of, that the Publication of the Roman Pontiff for Antichrist; and of the Church of Rome, for the whore of Babylon, announced to Catholics the wrath and irreconcilable enmity of Protestants, and was a full declaration of mortal unrelenting warfare against them, in which sense it has always been rightly understood by Calvinists and Fanatics.

These ingenious devices, and several others to the same purpose, were originally of foreign extraction; but it must be acknowledged that they have been very kindly received and adopted here; and that the same spirit that produced them has not been barren in our island. The Inscription made on the monument without the shadow of evidence to support it, is a powerful address against the Papists, made to the two most vengeful and cruel passions in the human breast, *Fear* and *Anger*; and remains as a public testimony of the truth of this observation.

This tremendous system of attacking Popery needs no comment to explain its meaning. I cannot here pass by a curious and expressive instance of it, that occurred to me lately in my reading. The great rebellion in Eng-  
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land in the year 1641, was begun and carried on to save the nation from the designs and attempts of Papists; the King's council and army were Papists, or inclined to Popery; he was himself popishly affected, and had Priests and Jesuits about him; every malignant measure, and every grievance of the nation, were owing to Papists; and the Saints took up arms, and fought the battles of the Lord against them. This was the subject and burden of every declaration made by the Rebels, while they were busied, undermining the kingly Power. But when, in the course of Providence, King Charles II. came to the Throne, and the Regicides were called to an account for their villanies; then the little babes of Grace proved, that they had been all along falsely charged with the murder of the King, and that they were the wicked Papists who were guilty of that shocking deed. It was not a clearer case that the Papists burned London, and that the Pope was present in disguise, than that the King's fate was decided both at Sorbonne and at Rome: and if no trace of the question remains in Rome, it is because the Pope ordered all the papers about it to be burned, when he found the horrible Parricide was cried down; however, a Roman Catholic in Paris got a copy of them, and shewed them to a Protestant friend, to whom he related the whole history. It is remarkable how circumstantial and prim the lye appeared abroad when it was dressed up: a grave Jesuit, who warned the King of what it would come to, if he did not shew favour to the Catholics, declared in a society of Jesuits in Rouen, their motives for putting the King to death, in the presence of a protestant Gentleman of good repute. Another Gentleman, who was on his way between Rouen and Diepe, met about thirty Jesuits, or their Disciples, who told him they were going to England to take arms in the independent army, and endeavour to be agitators. The reverend Mr. Cave, in the Pulpit, told his audience, in a sermon January 30, 1679, that the bloody tragedy of that day was laid at Rome, and acted by sects of their making. However extraordinary those instances of slander be, there is still something more surprising in the perfect security, the authors of them had in the credulity of the crowd,

crowd, which they held in such vast contempt, that they did not think it worth while to invent probabilities to impose on it. Nothing but the highest contempt of the judgment of the public could make men think of playing off such a wretched and unfledged plot as Oate's, or insist publicly that all the Papists in the kingdom ought to be found guilty of the Gun-Powder Treason, and of course forfeit their estates without trial or proof; and, indeed, that expectation better accounts for the origin of that dark plot, than any circumstance that has yet appeared.

From the moment the system appeared in a considerable number of the Reformed, to attack Popery by a misrepresentation of its doctrines, and of playing against it, the resentment and hatred of the crowd, raised by indirect and dishonest arts, when an immoveable resolution was taken to keep off every Truth that cleared the Papists, and a determined habit of abusing any body who attempted to discover such Truth, the Reformation appeared very terrible to Catholics, and was thought to contain the seeds of Persecution and Destruction. The latter had no moderator between them and the hatred of the Protestants, but the Protestant's private conscience; and the private consciences of men are too often the executors of the dictates of enthusiasm, ambition, licentiousness and prejudice; and without any form or delay give a ready dispensation for every crime the heart of man is capable to execute. The history of mankind universally bears witness to this truth, so humiliating to human nature.

To men passionately resolved, reason and truth, that contradict them, are not convicting but provoking. It was in vain for the Bishop of Meaux, to make an exposition of his faith; that exposition has been in vain acknowledged in Rome, and received the most authentic testimony possible of being the Catholic faith, by passing through all nations of the Catholic Church, without being censured by any convocation, or by any Bishop; and even through the fiery trial of Protestant hands, without being proved inconsistent with any article, or definition of the council of Trent. Notwithstanding all this the Bishop is declared to be a vile prevaricator, and



so is every Papist, who makes the same confession of faith, for pretending to know his own opinions best, or for offering to deny that to be his creed, which his Protestant friends are pleased to make for him. If the Bishop of Meaux had really departed from the Popish standard, if he had approached towards the doctrine of the Reformed, and published such a semi-reformation for the doctrine of the Church, he would like Jansenius, and some Jansenisted parliaments in a neighbouring kingdom, deserve a proportionable degree of favour from Protestants, and that would actually be the case, if he had deserted the Popish doctrines ever so little: but the cause of resentment against him, is not for drawing near to the Reformed, but evidently for exposing their falsehood; for washing away the spawl of the Adder's tongue, and for producing to the world the real picture of Popery, in a light that leaves no room for cavil or misrepresentation.

In like manner, this sect of accusers, (I call them so, to distinguish them from Protestants of integrity) seem to dread nothing so much as to have it proved, that the Catholics are a loyal, faithful, people; I mean, as far as religious principles can bind the children of Adam; or to have it discovered, that out of the Pope's territories, they are in strict communion with the Church of Rome, and yet, allow her not the least temporal jurisdiction. As such a discovery must break all the goodly scheme of prosecution, an attempt to make it, betrays them into every symptom of anger and revenge. If Philips, the author of Cardinal Pole's life, was desirous to conciliate his passionate censurers, nothing within the reach of human thought could be worse judged, than the apology he wrote since the publication of his history: the passive, mild, and Christian picture he gave of his own principles of subjection, and of the principles of all sincere Catholics, was insufferable, and to the last degree insulting, when he well knew the pictures, and contrast he drew in that history, was the true cause of the provocation he gave his antagonists. Nothing can possibly account for the eagerness, with which the Gentlemen I speak of press the Oath of Supremacy on Catholics, but a violent desire to have it kept out of the power

power of sincere Catholics, to give an assurance of their Loyalty to the King, and of their filial Affection to the Constitution. For, let any one of those who urge that Oath, as a fair trial of the Papists civil Principles in a Protestant Government, conceive an Oath, tendered to an Hugonot in France, that the Pope, or Lewis XV. is head of the Church of Christ in that Kingdom, will they say the Hugonot ought to take that Oath, or may take it with a good conscience? But then, they will tell me, I mistake in my parallel, for the Pope's authority is what they dread in England, and while a Catholic admits that, he cannot be a good subject in a Protestant state. But surely, if it be universally irrational to require of a Dissenter from the Prince's Religion, to swear to the spiritual Supremacy of his Prince, it is so in England as well as it would be in France; for if subjects be loyal and amenable in all mundane affairs, what further does any earthly Government require? If Papists in England and Ireland sincerely believe, that the Pope has no temporal jurisdiction, or any pretence whatever over these nations, and that he cannot absolve subjects from their allegiance; if they be ready with their lives and fortunes to oppose any invasion of the Pope, or the imperial Sovereign, and free authority of these Realms, they are unexceptionably good and faithful subjects, although they be not convinced of the King's spiritual Supremacy; and their Oath is undoubtedly as good a security, that these are their Principles, as it is in case of the Oath of Supremacy. I speak distinctly of the King's spiritual Supremacy, because the objection of Catholics is to that only, in common with other Dissenters. Now if there be no guile or duplicity in the oppression of Catholics, if they be prosecuted for the security of the State, and not truly for conscience sake, let there be a Test administered to them, free from all speculative Questions, which does not goad away the Conscience; let it be expressed in the terms necessary, and proper, to enforce the obedience of the subject, to abjure the Pope's power of absolving subjects from their allegiance, and any other papal authority in Temporals; and if Catholics refuse such a testimony of allegiance, they are no longer tolerable in society, and they become  
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with justice the objects of Prosecution. But it is equally evident, that to plead against giving them such a Test, and to persecute them, because they will not take a Test, which no honest Catholic, how amenable soever to the Government can take, to bring them to the dilemma, either to swear against the Pope's Supremacy in Spirituals, or to be deemed enemies to the King and State in Temporals, is a detestable strain of oppression, unworthy the genius and honesty of this nation. Julian the apostate is said to contrive something like this against the Christians. He had the statues of the Emperors placed along with the idols of the Gods, in order that the Christians passing by, should either by the reverence they made, acknowledge themselves idolaters, agreeable to the public test, or be accused of want of respect and duty to the Emperors.

The pleadings of humanity, of sincerity, and justice signify nothing in behalf of a people, who at all events are to be found guilty ; or to cut off the resources of men, who are resolved not to be convinced. " There were but a few Papists admitted into the horrid secret of the Powder Plot, *says one* ; Prudence dictated such a step, but the Pope was undoubtedly at the head of it, for he gave certain Briefs and certain Bulls to that purpose ; for which you are to take my word, who never saw them. Besides, Father Garnet, the principal Conspirator, is at this day honoured at Rome as a true Martyr." *Says another*, in the same paper, " There were some Roman Catholics in those days, who did not approve of the plots and conspiracies of their jesuited brethren ; but Casaubon informs us, that the Councils at Rome were different ; therefore every Catholic in England, who adhered to the Church of Rome, must, of course, approve of the plot." This is the beaten track ; when all honest evidence fails, some Casaubon or other issues forth from the Mint a new-coined lye, to give a colour for condemning and oppressing Papists. As a colour for oppressing them is all that is wanting, it is sufficient that it is said by some body ; it relieves the cause, and acquires a party currency ever after. I have called this of Casaubon's a lie, because it is palpably so ; for, whoever is the original Publisher of a story, without  
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any credible voucher, or visible authority, is by all rules of criticism, to be esteemed the Author, and to enjoy the honour of the invention. But since there were some Roman Catholics of those days, who did not approve of the plot, is it not fairer reasoning to say, the Pope, and Church of Rome, in whose communion they lived, did not approve of it? And since Father Garnet, who suffered, not as one of the Gentlemen says, in the usual prevaricating stile, for being the principal conspirator, or being at all engaged in the conspiracy, but for concealing what he heard in confession relative to it, at his death utterly condemned it, and all plots upon a religious account, as inconsistent with Christianity, and the Catholic religion; and since he is honoured at Rome as a martyr, is not a juster conclusion to say, that Rome, where honours are never given to those who deny her powers, or to those who prepossess people against her, approves of the doctrine he preached at his death, and makes this authentic declaration, that the Catholics of England, are bound in allegiance to their Protestant governors, and cannot be absolved from it,

I will finish my discourse with two remarkable instances of prevarication, made use of against Popery. At the beginning of the Reformation in England, and long after, it was the mode for Protestant Writers and Preachers, to lay claim to the Fathers, and introduce them in their discourses, as good old Protestants. The Papists, amazed at this attempt, to ravish from them their revered guides, heaped passage upon passage, and quotation upon quotation, to prove, that the Fathers held the very doctrines they themselves do; but they were cried up for deceivers and impostors for doing so. Luckily for the Protestants in this contest, the Fathers were wrapped up from public view, in an unknown tongue, which enabled them to maintain the Protestantcy of those venerable Gentlemen, with much the same kind of logic, though not the same humour, that Isaac Bickerstaff Esq; did the death of Patridge; and that loyal Almanack-maker, was not more unconscionably ridiculed, for asserting to the world that he was alive, than the Papists were, for pretending that the old Writers



ters of the Church were Papists. Their quotations were treated as downright forgeries, and the passages they urged were counter-translated into good Protestant English: however, the claim suddenly dropped, and their ancient Record-keepers were restored to the Papists, to their great joy. Middleton, speaking of the debate, which was subsiding in his time, says, he pities the Protestants, when he sees them struggling for the Fathers, that is, when he sees the Insincerity and Fraud, with which they were obliged to reconcile those old witnesses of the Christian doctrines in their own times, to the Reformation. This kind of prevarication is at present pretty much disused, but it stands in full force against the first English Protestant Writers, and will bring their integrity into question, as long as their Writings continue in the world.

Some impostures fall early, and to others, fortune gives a longer date. There is hardly a Protestant in England who entertains a doubt at this day, that the Popish Clergy do not restrain the Laity from reading the Scriptures. Is it possible, you will say, that this can be a false charge? is not the Fact, and also the Reason of it notorious? Bishop Burnet tells us, "the Monks engrossed the riches, and it was not consistent with their Designs, nor with the Arts used to promote them, to let the Scriptures be much known." This is the eccho of pulpits, and can it be supposed, that the reverend Clergy are capable of such a bold imposture, even when they speak to the people in the name of the Lord of Truth? Such a supposition, is, I own, almost incredible; yet, shall we believe our senses, and the evidence of facts? If you go to the Booksellers, and enquire, you will find two or three English versions, made of the Scriptures at different times, for the reading of the Popish Laity: if you object, that these were made since the Reformation, I refer you to Collier's Ecclesiastical History, Page 109, of the second volume; where he informs you of seven different Monks, whose names are known, who translated the Scriptures, or some part of them, into the Saxon language, before the Norman Conquest; besides what was done that way by the secular Clergy; and after the Conquest

Conquest, he observes, that Monks as well as the secular Clergy, made such translations. The same design that gave being to this falshood, produced another not very unlike it, that the Popish Clergy discourage learning. If you think it too much trouble to go to Flanders or France, to see the Popish Clergy cultivating the Sciences, you need only open the *Spectacle de la Nature*, Rollin's Works, or almost an infinite variety of Books, written for the improvement of human knowledge, by the Popish Clergy, to be convinced of the falshood of this charge. The truth is, when a Deluge of northern Barbarians poured over Europe, and threatened the total extinction of learning, the precious remains of antiquity we have at this day, found shelter in the silent cells of Monks, and were there preserved to enlighten Europe.

However, this system of combating Popery, tho' very general, was far from being universal; for some Protestants have condemned it, and more have condemned the treacherous and inimicable intention, for which it was adopted. As it was a part of the scheme, that every body who attempted to enter into a fair discussion of the truth of the charges against Popery, was to be branded as a Papist, and pelted with abuse, very few Protestants undertook an employment so unpromising to their fortune, their character or ease; whence it happened, that those who in their hearts condemned this ungenerous fraudulent plan were yet silent, and that very many honest men, who would not willingly countenance calumny or unjust oppression, were imposed upon, and surprized into the system, in the integrity of their hearts, so that the truly guilty, who lie at the ear of the Public, poisoning the human divine soul with malevolence and falshood, are fewer than they appear to be; and Catholics may make this reflection under their wrongs, that the same party, by the very same detestable arts, drew an odium on the Church by law established, and set up her Clergy to the crowd, as marks of public resentment and injury, from which neither are yet wholly recovered.

*At our next Meeting, the Gentleman who has hitherto spoken in the Character of Publius, at the opening of our Debates, arose, and made the following Speech.*

MR. PRESIDENT,

**W**HAT I have hitherto said would be imperfect, if I had not obviated the general plea that is made to weaken the complaints of Catholics. Catholics have always complained of the injustice and insincerity of Protestants in misrepresenting both Popery and its Professors. And this in circumstances, wherein it is hardly possible to commit a Mistake. They have traced the vein of insincerity farther, they have attempted to prove from the testimony of facts, in which there is a surprizing agreement, and the tendency of doctrines, that the generality of the first Reformers had some motives which lay deeper at their hearts, than the meek suffering spirit of the gospel, or a love of Truth and Religion; and for this purpose, they laid open the lives, the rebellions, and real pursuits of the first Reformers. The retrospect was often mortifying, and it was necessary to answer it, because, altho' religious opinions ought to stand or fall by their own truth only, and not by the characters of the Doctors who introduce them, yet until the truth be fully examined and demonstrated, this circumstance of a bad voucher determines the probability against the truth of the doctrine, and at the bar of conscience, it takes away all plea of innocent error or mistake from all those who follow such men, without making the most wary and jealous discussion of the truth, and weighing the merits of the arguments very maturely *pro* and *con*. Bayle one of the most penetrating reasoners of the last or any age, attentively viewed the allegations of Catholics on this head on all sides, and having considered them well, thought proper not to deny them wholly, but instead of doing so, to make retortions, and to draw parallels amongst Catholics, in order to shew, that Popes, and others of them, were equally guilty of the very crimes they object to the first Protestant Reformers, and that their  
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writers were equally addicted to misrepresentation and slander.

To Luther's complaisance to the lusts of his patron the Prince of Hesse, and to the irregular calls of concupisance in general, in the married, as well as the unmarried; to his breach of vows, to his filthy virulent language, and violent impatient temper, as well as to the failings of the other primitive Reformers, Mr. *Bayle* and Mr. *Claude*, oppose the wickedness of several Popes. You will readily recollect a letter wrote on the same plan, and published in the Ledger, in answer to that signed *Fair Plea*, stuffed with retortions. I am now proceeding to shew you the insufficiency of this kind of answer, and that the allegations of Catholics still stand in full force, notwithstanding the parallels urged by their Adversaries.

However criminal several of the Popes have been, yet in this case their crimes have not the same weight in the balance, because those dissolute Popes were not the Authors or Apostles of any Doctrines or Religions that were novel in their own days; they come into their station without bringing a suspicion, that their doctrines were the offspring of their depraved and evil dispositions, because they introduced nothing peculiar to themselves, and only handed down tenets, and a religious system, which passed to them from several pious and good men. Every body must observe the difference of imputation it brings on revealed Religion, between saying Moses and Aaron were wicked selfish men, as some Deists insinuate, and saying Caiphas was so; that Luther and other Fathers of the Reformation, acted against their consciences in the licence they gave their Protector, seems palpable, by the charge of privacy, with which, as they imagined, they secured it from the knowledge of the world: now, the difference between Luther and his compeers doing this, who were the Apostles of the Reformation, and any of their followers will easily occur.

However, Luther, and his Fellow-labourers, were impelled by the love of Truth to make a party against the Church of Rome, it is evident, that in their separation they had something at heart dearer than their love  
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of Truth or the Gospel, both of which they sacrificed to a stronger motive, when they perceived there was danger of losing the Prince of Hesse, unless they made their Conscience and the Gospel yield to his appetite. I do not mean to deny, that the first Reformers had a design to propagate the Gospel, or that they were in downright earnest in their opposition to Popery; it would be an injury to Truth to deny it; I only mean to say, that along with their religious sentiments, they had other passions of, at least, equal influence over them; which we must consider as active principles in their minds along with their love of Religion; and that if any one looks narrowly into their behaviour, he will find it difficult to prove, that it was not the same motive, which solicited them to gratify the Prince of Hesse, in order to secure him to their party, that prevailed with them to gain over to their side the great and powerful, with the riches of the Catholic Church, which was securing an immense and determined opposition against it. And, indeed, it is undeniable, that the party has looked upon the endowing of men with the possessions of the Church, as a motive of engaging Partisans to resist it. In part of the Petition sent by the Protestant Exiles of Queen Mary's reign to England, which is directed to the Nobility and Commons, the Protestants abroad endeavoured to alarm the Nobility by a prospect of losing their Abbey Lands: and Doctor Ridley, who suffered for his Religion in that reign, in a Letter to Grindal then in Germany, laments the insincerity of King Edward's Ministry, seeing that they professed the Reformation, and countenanced the Clergy of that persuasion, for mercenary ends, and to enrich themselves with the Estates belonging to the Church. It is plain, he might equally have bewailed the Protestant Bishops of that reign, who bribed over the Magistracy, with a considerable part of the Episcopal Estates, for the sake of enjoying the remainder.

Ingenious and suspicious men, who are not easily deceived with cant and external profession to overlook the real natural motives of people, who give evident symptoms of being swayed by their passions and interests, will also be apt to attribute the very general propensity

penfity of the firft Reformers to Rebellion and Sedition. Their fedulous care of fecuring to themfelves the power and property of this world, their breach of vows, their remiffion of fafts and other austerities, their great zeal to depoil the Church, and, in fhort, the whole complexion of their new doctrines, to fomething very diftant from Chriftianity and the Gofpel. Now it is plain, that retortions drawn from the actions of wicked Popes, and of other Catholics, who made no alteration in the Religion of their predeceffors, do not come up to the point of counter-balance, fince the charge againft Luther and his Fellow-labourers in the Reformation is, that their religious principles were modelled and influenced by thofe corruptions and paffions, to which the human heart pays its fecret, and moft un-ign'd devotions.

In ftriking the balance on the mutual charge of calumnies and flanders, we muft make a difference between the scandals of a few Writers of a Party, which yet the main Body of that Party condemn and neglect as matter that deferves no credit, and thofe capital Scandals which are afferted by the bulk of a Party, and are thought fo effential to their Intereft as to make men abufe friend and foe in their defence, and look on every perfon as an enemy to the caufe who offers to queftion them. To the firft kind of flanders, Proteftants and Papifts and all other adverfe Factions amongft men are liable, by the weaknefs of human Nature, and the falfe colouring of Prejudice; for we are apt to believe the worft of our Adverfaries, and the beft of our own Party, without the leaft Design or Malice. There were feveral abfurd and monftrous ftories told of Luther, befides thofe his own hand figned to, but Catholic Writers in general flighted them; and from the moment Monfieur Bayle mentioned their falfehood and abfurdity, Catholics have acquiefced without further difpute. When the hardy attempts of the Calvinifts in France were frefh, and their views apparent, the Dukes of *Guife* got followers to favour their Ambition; and there were villains found amongft Catholics, who perpetrated the fhocking Maffacre of Paris; but the Duke of *Guife*, and the affaffins, are long given up to infamy and deteftation, by  
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the Catholics of France in their public writings. Now I charge none of this kind of scandals on Protestants, I mean scandals which they retract, or do not defend when the fallhood appears palpable: I charge none upon them, but clear, conscious fallhoods, such as from the nature of the evidence cannot be mistaken, which they cease to espouse by the calm powers of Reason, but continue to defend desperately in the face of Conviction with scurrility and abuse. It is the glaring Insincerity, and wilful False-evidence, adopted as a Plan of attacking and destroying an Antagonist I complain of. A true parallel can only lie in the same system of conduct. Was it ever known, that Roman Catholics charged any sect or body of Protestants with direct express Doctrines, which those Protestants denied; or that after such denial, the Roman Catholics insisted on the charge: but do not Protestants persevere to accuse Catholics with Doctrines which they deny, and the opposite to which they teach? and do they not with amazing obstinacy and wrath, rage against every Catholic who pretends to know his own Religion better, or who disclaims the Principles his adversaries were pleased to make for him? From what I have said, it will be easy to determine whether the Retorsions come up to the point of Parallel, or no\*.

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\* I have now finished Publius's Reflections on the Dispute in the Ledger. Some people, no doubt, will judge that he has treated his Subject with uncommon Freedom, others that he might have pushed his Arguments further than he has done; but what alone is worth consideration is, whether he has spoken with Truth and Integrity, for if he has done that, his Freedom is virtue. In order to put his thoughts to the severest test possible, they are here, along with the Letters that occasioned them, laid before the Public for their inspection and judgment. In both the Letters and Discourses the common methods of attacking Popery, and the errors of those methods are displayed; but the Writers, with great propriety, did not offer to substitute any other methods in their stead, because the Gospel points out its own politics and scheme of æconomy, which is in e-

very Protestant's hands. It requires no great reasoning to prove, that true Christianity cannot be served by falsehood, treachery, reviling, and injustice; that it is its real interest, that Truths be brought to light, and Falsehoods detected: and on the contrary, that it must be the property of false Religion, to be ruined by coming into light, and to preserve itself by imposture; so that, whoever discovers upon a full examination, that the interests of any particular Religion require absolutely that it be defended with Falsehood and Injustice, he must form a judgment that it is not true Christianity, and that its sincere Professors must be under some mistake, although they be not sensible thereof. The result of this Collection then, is the following Truth: That whoever defends directly or obliquely, the usual chicaneries against Popery; or whoever, neglecting the arms which Truth and the Gospel hold forth to the Christian, attacks that Religion, by trumping up fictitious Doctrines and Principles under her name, the contrary of which she manifestly teaches, takes very ill-judged and defective methods of combating Popery, and gives the Papists signal advantages over him, agreeable to the Title prefixed to this Collection.

Nothing can add to the disgrace of applying to Falsehood, Injustice, and Calumny, for aid against Popery, but a Postulatum or condition that lies at the bottom of some of the Letters published in the Ledger; That Papists ought to be punished if they do not listen and acquiesce to those Falsehoods and Calumnies, and as a worthy Writer expresses it on a different occasion, stand like cocks on a Shrove-Tuesday, who must receive all the strokes without returning any, and be tied up on purpose to be knocked down. I cannot finish my reflections on this head, better than by inserting the following Letter which was published in the Ledger; but first before I part my Reader, I must inform him, that in these Notes where he meets with the monosyllable I, he is to understand the present Register to our Club.



**I**T can no more be a part of Christianity, than it is of Humanity, to draw the wrath of the Public upon a people, who, without committing any actual Crime, are under the sentence of the Laws, and have no defence or hopes, but what are founded on the liberal Spirit of the Government, and the benevolent Disposition of the Nation. To deprive the Roman Catholics of that last Resource of the distressed, seems to be the apparent aim of several gentlemen who write against them. *A Trader but not in Conscience*, in your Ledger of July 26 says, it is beyond dispute, that they (the Papists) began the present Controversy, by endeavouring indirectly to discredit Protestantism, the doing of which he construes to be a disquieting of the consciences of others, for which they merit hanging. A man is certainly in a very precarious situation, who is to be hanged for the indirect tendencies of his words, interpreted by his adversary in a religious debate. There are probably good Protestants, who think every body, by the great charter of Reason, have a natural indefeasible right to make a free enquiry; and that the eternal indispensable Laws of Morality defend men in the search and pursuit of truth; but suppose truth was not the common property, like air, suppose an examination of the established religion were prohibited; surely this exclusion ought not to be explained so, as to deprive a man of self-defence when he is attacked, or of pleading Not Guilty, when he is arraigned.

The present case is as follows, and all the kingdom know it to be true; the Papists have been an hundred times over and over, arraigned in the public papers, on those charges which the Freethinker attempted to confute. Our equitable Laws allow all Criminals to appear at the Bar where they are indicted, to make their defence as well as they can; and to offer their Proofs in order to acquit themselves. 'Tis true, if in the course of evidence it appears, that the charge is in the whole or in part false, it brings an indirect discredit on the Accusers; but was that ever reputed a good reason, to refuse a man the liberty of defending himself, and pleading to an Impeachment? yet this Liberty is the Crime,

for which Papists deserve to be hanged. They were impeached to the Public, for certain grievous offences against Morality and Common-sense; they pleaded *not guilty*, and so brought on a controversy; such as the prisoner at the bar always holds with his accusers. The Freethinker, whether he be a Papist or no, in the course of his defence, spoke for the Roman Catholics with great modesty; he every where treats the Church of England and the Reformation with inviolable respect; through his Letters there is not a single syllable against any Protestant principle, or that defends any Popish doctrine; and he constantly inculcated, that the accusations he went about to refute, were made by a kind of People, for whom no Church is answerable. What is it then, that is injurious in those Letters? Why truly, those Wrongheads, and their legitimate heirs, who thought it better to attack Popery with falshood than with truth when their crude tales were questioned, according to custom, dragged the Protestant Religion into their quarrel, in which it is no way concerned; the Temple is on fire, and Catholics ought to be hanged, for making a defence, and bringing on a controversy about the articles charged upon them. This is exactly the Fable of the Wolf and the Lamb drinking at the same rivulet, exhibited in human life. Wicked Papist, says some *Trader but not in Conscience*, you are guilty of firing cities, and you feast your eyes upon the distresses of the miserable and distracted inhabitants; you had a hand in the gunpowder plot; you give your Pope the attributes of the Divinity, you believe him to be infallible and impeccable, you arm him with Powers, that beneath his Influence you may perpetrate more sublime and extensive wickedness. You take as much pains to keep people in ignorance, as others do to propagate knowledge. Men cannot be too speedy in getting ropes, and tying you up from further mischief. I beg your pardon, honoured Sir, answered the Papist, if you be so good to examine, you will find all those charges ill grounded; and for my part, if you give me leave to know my own mind, I can aver that these absurd doctrines and wicked principles, are none of mine. Ah! you traiterous Papist, replies the

the *Trader*, have I caught you in the fact? Do you attempt to disturb mens consciences, and by your Arguments to discredit me who am a Protestant? I will do all that lies in my power to make you an example to all falsehearted Papists, who endeavour to make Profelytes to their religion, and to raise scruples in mens consciences.

This is a comfortable dilemma for the Papists, they are to be rendered the objects of Public Detestation and Persecution, by accusations calculated to make them odious, and if they offer to speak a word in their own defence, or to clear themselves of the charges brought against them, then they ought to be hanged up for disturbing the consciences of men, and indirectly discrediting their Protestant accusers. What is the meaning of this procedure, but that Papists must purchase their indulgence by silence, and an approbation of every thing said against them, however false; and that they ought humbly to thank their lenient accusers, when they carry their resentments no farther? Such barefaced insults upon justice and rectitude, need only to be mentioned, to shock the friends of Truth and Candour. No body, I hope, will think I am speaking for Papists, or that I confine my views to the sects or divisions of men; I am soliciting for the Rights of human Nature, and pleading for a principle, which I would have all the world know to be the real Principle, and Glory of Protestants. If an acknowledged Jesuit had said, that it is a discredit directly or indirectly to the Protestant religion to make an enquiry, and that an examination would disturb the consciences of Protestants, it would be in character, and could do no great mischief, because people would understand his meaning; but when a Protestant speaks in this manner, he condemns himself, he abandons his Principle; and whatever name he assumes, he can no more be looked upon as a Friend to the Protestant Cause, than the Inquisitor General at Lisbon.

It cannot be too clearly proved, and inculcated to Protestants and Papists, that those wise men, who press for a Protestant prosecution, against people who are guilty of no personal crime, do so undoubtedly in opposition to their principle, either to gratify a ferocious

inimicable temper, or for some private worldly motive, or to excuse themselves the trouble of leading a Christian life; for prosecution is not the natural guardian of the Reformation, but a most ambiguous auxiliary to it. How capriciously do human interests and motives influence and sophisticate the opinions of the Times! It is certain, that what the Merchant said in his letter July 19, is strictly agreeable to the great and essential principle of the Reformation; and every body who reads him with attention, must see that he faithfully adheres to that vital principle, without which the Reformation could not exist; and merely for so doing, is represented as a Papist, while his Antagonists pass for sincere Protestants, on account of their zeal against liberty of conscience, a free enquiry, and the exclusion they would put on men, from coming to trial, and pleading *Not Guilty*, to the Articles laid to their charge.

I am, &c.

*An Advocate for the Rights of human Nature.*



## P O S T S C R I P T.

THE editor hath been persuaded against his own judgment to take some notice of two pieces lately published, the one wrote by Mr. Benjamin Pye in five letters, professedly against the free examination, the other by Mr. Francis Blackburne, M. A. archdeacon of Cleveland, both against granting toleration of worship to papists. A person of moderate capacity may easily take out of the Free Examination a very full and sufficient answer to every thing they say in those pieces, for their purpose: for the method they took to compile their books, was to add together, as fancy led them, the very propositions answered, and the misrepresentations detected in the foregoing sheets, without taking the least notice of the answers. However odd this method of writing a book may be, what I say, will appear evident to any person who looks closely into the Free Examination,



Examination, for he will find there in some part or other, the substance of the reply I am just going to make to these gentlemen.

They are both clergymen, their professed design is to prove the expediency of denying liberty of worship in their own way to catholics. It is difficult to persuade a nation, who are naturally humane, and lovers of freedom, of the necessity of bigotry or cruelty; but it is not difficult to raise the passions, even of the most generous men to acts of cruelty and injustice. Upon the knowledge of this weak side of human nature, the reverend brethren evidently proceeded.

The arguments they make use of to persuade their readers that papists should not be tolerated, are contained in a small compass; they lie for the most part in Mr. Pye's first letter, and in a few pages of the archdeacon's book, all the rest are dedicated to the pious purpose of enflaming the legislature, against a set of their wretched countrymen who lie at their mercy. As there is no material difference in their arguments, I will only quote the archdeacon's words, the same reply will serve both.

“ Let us now turn, says he, to the roman catholicks  
 “ who live under our protestant government, and consider how far their conduct and principles intitle them  
 “ to the toleration for which they plead.

“ If the only objections we have to papists were that  
 “ they hold transubstantiation, purgatory, saint-worship, the proper sacrifice of Christ in the mass, or  
 “ some other doctrines merely religious, wherein the  
 “ papists differ from protestants, the former would be  
 “ entitled to toleration, on the same footing with other  
 “ dissenters from the established church. These doctrines, abstracted from the authority on which the  
 “ roman catholics support and inforce them, might be  
 “ professed and practised, by persons who might still  
 “ be good subjects to the state. They might pretend  
 “ scriptural authority for these doctrines, strange and  
 “ absurd as they are, and adhere to them on that pretence only. As matters of private opinion, or, if  
 “ you will, of conscience, they would be no more

“ obnoxious to the magistrate than other harmless  
 “ peculiarities which distinguish one sect from another.

“ But when we find that the papists ground these  
 “ doctrines on the infallibility of the pope or the church  
 “ of Rome, and pronounce all to be heretics who dis-  
 “ sent from that church, — that they consider such he-  
 “ retics as *de jure* excluded from all civil and social as  
 “ well as religious privileges, — that catholics are not  
 “ obliged to keep faith with them, more particularly  
 “ where their covenants with heretics interfere with  
 “ the interests of their church, — that any cruelties or  
 “ executions inflicted upon heretics convict, are suffi-  
 “ ciently authorised by a commission from the pope or  
 “ the church of Rome, — and that every papist is bound,  
 “ on the peril of damnation, to a strict obedience, and  
 “ an implicit submission, to the dictates of the pope  
 “ and his church: — When these doctrines, I say, are  
 “ added to their other tenets, it is evident that no pro-  
 “ testant prince or state can be safe from the destruc-  
 “ tive practices of papists a moment longer than they  
 “ are the weaker party.” p. 69 to 78.

We have just gone over Mr. Blackburne's popish principles, who after several other busy creed-makers, has taken upon him to make a profession of faith for roman catholicks, without any commission from them for doing so; but as it is not very clear that he or any other man upon earth has authority to make rules of faith or religious principles for them against their own wills, and some people may think, that what they themselves teach, is their doctrine, and what they profess, is their principle, let us see what they say on the obnoxious articles in question; leaving it to the decision of the intelligent reader, whether what Mr. Blackburne teaches for papists, or what they profess and teach for themselves, ought to be taken for their principles.

Catholics have no such article of faith as the infallibility of the pope, they neither profess nor believe it, and the very reverse is publicly taught in the universities and colleges of France, for the truth of which I refer my readers to Tournelly, and the other writers of divinity, whose treatises are read and taught in all the seminaries in France. — With innumerable protestants they

they believe the infallibility of the church of God ; and if they suppose themselves to be the most orthodox christians, so do all sects of Christians upon earth.

They neither believe nor teach that heretics are to be excluded from civil and social rights ; accordingly, in all the states of Germany, where the government is in popish hands, protestant subjects enjoy those rights, and protestants enjoyed them in France by law, until the sovereign was convinced that the power of protestants, and the authority he challenged to himself, were incompatible, and that they were ready, whenever occasion offered, to dispute with him the prerogative he desired to establish ; whence it appears incontestably, that there is no principle in the catholic church that excludes protestants from civil and social rights. When the government of Rome became christian, and christians were then papists, as Conyers Middleton has unanswerably proved, they tolerated heathens, and Constantine took great care his heathen subjects should enjoy all social rights. That the same principles are still retained and improved in the church of Rome, appears from this circumstance ; that the orders given by Constantine for tolerating his heathen subjects, are recorded, reserved, and approved of, by popish writers down to this day.

Catholics themselves profess and teach, that they are obliged by their religion, to keep faith inviolably with heretics, and they practise what they teach. Kings and ministers, of state, who know this matter better than obscure ecclesiastics, are convinced of the good faith of catholics : The protestant sovereigns of Germany accept of the oath of fidelity of their catholic subjects, as our own government has of the conquered subjects of Canada.

The cruelties and executions inflicted on heretics in catholic states, are not authorized by any commission of the church of Rome, and that Church denies that she gives or has the power of giving, any commission to torture or execute heretics.

No papist upon earth is bound upon the peril of damnation, or any other peril, to a strict obedience or implicit submission to the dictates of the popes ; nor is it

a doctrine of popery, that the church of Rome, or any other church, has any authority or power to intermeddle in civil government. There are indeed few protestants who are really apprehensive of the pope's power or influence at this day. It is, I own, hard to judge, that christians, and clergymen, willingly propagate a falsehood against their consciences, and attempt to impose on the public, with a view to draw prosecution on men who have not offended them, and whose only crime it is, to pay to God the duty they think they owe him; yet on the other hand, can we judge that Mr. Pye, and Mr. Blackburne do not look into a news-paper, and that they remain perfect strangers to the pope's fallen authority in catholic nations? If they be ignorant of it, they are certainly the only men of reading in England who are so; every one knows, that not only the great and potent popish powers refuse to pay the pope an implicit submission, but that the petty princes and states of Italy in his neighbourhood insult him; yet that they remain in communion with him, as well as in perfect security. If we charitably suppose the reverend brethren so ignorant as not to know this, it would certainly be more prudent in them to suppress their passion, as well as their itch of writing, and forbear instructing people of more knowledge than themselves; but if they consciously abuse the public, with a design to draw distresses on innocent men, the virtuous and candid of their own communion will consider them as malevolent men, and enemies to mankind.

Mr. Pye is aware, that English popish priests in their writings addressed to the public, and in their mass-houses, preach obedience and subjection to a protestant government; but he thinks the integrity of our historians a more respectable testimony, than the ostentatious declarations of popish teachers. More creditable testimonies of what? Not of their doctrines, for if words preserve their usual meaning, men's doctrines are what they teach and inculcate, and if the popish priesthood, while they demean themselves peaceably, and by their writings and exhortations inculcate obedience to a protestant government in all temporal affairs, are still punishable for disloyalty, I would fain know what disloyalty



loyalty is. I would recommend it to those terrible inquisitors, who are so ready to prosecute and condemn priests who are not guilty in word or deed, to point out some test of loyalty, that may be taken by honest men, who believe the pope to be the first ecclesiastic in their church, I say this because some men who are conscious that papists hold obedience and fealty to a protestant king, and yet who are desirous to have them believed guilty of dangerous principles, insidiously plead to have the oath of supremacy joined to the oath of allegiance, in order to keep away papists from giving a test of their loyalty.

But hold, say those two gentlemen, the annals of England and Ireland are too pregnant with the examples of popish sedition and disloyalty, to be overbalanced by their writings, sermons, and exhortations tending to instil obedience to a protestant government. Are mens actions then a fair test of their principles? if they be, this rule is not founded in the nature of things for papists only, it is equally a test of protestant principles. Shall we then apply it to the various countries of Europe, and try which were protestants or papists most guilty of sedition and disloyalty, which disturbed the peace of nations most, overturned most states, or dethroned most kings since the rise of the reformation? Or if protestants do not chuse to make the comparison, and tacitly allow, that those of their own communion have been most guilty, let them honestly acknowledge, that whilst men have human passions, they may very frequently enter into seditions and rebellions, altho' they profess a good religion, and acknowledge no principles but those of the gospel of peace. However, the catholicks of these nations have been remarkably loyal, and when the archdeacon comes to collect their rebellions, he appears to labour hard on barren grounds. Of their behaviour to queen Elizabeth, he says, she was left to the mercy of the first ruffian by the pope's bull; but altho' some millions of these popish ruffians then lived in England, and at her accession, the majority by far in her kingdom were papists, she sat on her throne many years in great security, with little disturbance from them. He after, according to rule, speaks of the  
gunpowder

gunpowder plot, and Irish massacre, but as he was not pleased to shew by what rules of equity, men who knew nothing of the plot while it was carrying on, were nevertheless guilty of it; and whilst it appears from stubborn records, that the Irish papists precedent to the rebellion there, laboured under grievances, which in all nations usually drive men into rebellion, these instances are nothing to his purpose.

If the hardships the Irish underwent at that time on account of religion, are to be reckoned amongst their motives for this rebellion, (for it is to be observed that they were a dependant nation, and in such nations there always will be temporal dissatisfactions and jealousies) have not religious oppressions been in all ages a motive of sedition? does not every man who thinks his eternal happiness depends upon fulfilling the duties of his religion, desire earnestly to be suffered to worship God in Peace; and does not every oppression that chafes the mind, and reduces it to despair, tend to plunge men into rebellion, without becoming proofs or demonstrations of disloyal principles? is it not credible, that men may be rebellious, and guilty of every crime, altho' they should be instructed in their religious principles by prophets inspired by heaven; that the vices of human nature, revenge, pride, ambition and covetousness, will operate among men in spite of religion; that the principles of men are what they believe and profess, be their practices ever so opposite thereto, and that disloyalty by principle, can no more be proved by actual rebellion, than cheating and covetousness by principle, can be proved from the dishonesty and avarice of mankind? I will not here conclude, that the gentlemen I speak to, are so ignorant of human nature, as not to know all this; nor can I on the other hand judge any men on earth to be of such malignant dispositions, as to deduce the rebellions of papists from their principles, without allowing any part for human passions, resentment, or vice, in order to draw down oppressions and injuries on their fellow-creatures; I submit this matter to the determination of my readers.

But, say those charitable ecclesiastics, we molest no Papist for meditating in his closet, or reading his books of  
of

of devotion, we only deny them their religious worship, prosecute their priests, and imprison them for life. — very indulgent truly! it is no great matter to restrain men by law from paying to God the Worship they think acceptable to him, that they believe firmly he requires, and without which their consciences cannot be at rest: it is also a trifling matter, to confine men in prison to languish there for life, without hopes of a release.

One of these charitable priests puts the question, if papists be excluded from toleration merely on account of their political doctrines, why are they molested in their religious worship? why are their priests persecuted? to this question he answers.

“ 1. Whenever the papists will openly and candidly disavow those political principles which render them obnoxious to our civil government, we shall then be able to distinguish between those principles and their religious opinions. In the present state of popery, both sorts of doctrine are so intimately incorporated with each other, as not to admit of any separation, till they shall think fit to make it themselves. In the mean time, every papist is of course an enemy to the British constitution, and the guardians of that constitution have no way of knowing who is or who is not a papist, but by his practising popish rites and devotions.

“ 2. The priests of that communion are known, by the authentic forms which invest them with their function, to be more especially bound to an implicit obedience to a foreign and inimical jurisdiction, with an express exclusion of all subjection to an heretical government. A popish priest is accordingly known to be an enemy to our government, by the same tokens that discover him to be a priest. And hence it is that his saying or singing Mass brings him within the reach of the penal laws, without farther evidence.”

Now to these answers I reply. 1. Papists do openly and candidly disavow those principles, under pretence of which they are obnoxious to the civil government: they are willing to give any test that can be offered of their loyalty and fidelity to a protestant government, in all the

the affairs that regard this life; they always called eagerly for such a test, and were always industriously denied it, by tacking to the oath of allegiance, an oath of supremacy, which no honest papist, nor even any protestant who is not of the monarch's religion, can take with a good conscience; they are willing to take such candid tests as assure the German princes of the loyalty of their catholick subjects, or such an one, as the government hath accepted from the catholics of Canada; they are willing to take any oath which regards only their demeanour in this life, wherein alone they are subject to temporal government; they desire only to be excused from a renunciation of their religion, or swearing decisively to speculative points that never were yet clearly decided. Their tenderness to deceive protestants by oaths is a pledge of their sincerity to them. Why are not fair oaths tendered to them, such as ensure their fidelity on this side the grave? the answer is obvious, they undoubtedly would give such a test, they always offered to do so, and might by that means be rescued from the prosecution, which the reverend gentlemen I speak to, so warmly contend for.

2 Priests of the popish communion are not known by the authentic Forms which invest them with their Function, to be more especially bound to an implicit obedience to a foreign and inimical jurisdiction, nor with any express exclusion of all subjection, or of any civil and temporal subjection to an heretical government. If Mr. Blackburne knows of any such authentic form, or if he knows by whom it is known, he ought to have made it public, together with his cause of knowledge; but as the argument remains at present, it stands thus. " I " Francis Blackburne, M. A. dean of Cleveland, assert " stily, that the priests of the popish communion are " known by somebody to be expressly excluded of all " temporal subjection to an heretical government and " therefore they are enemies to our government." — I have added the word *temporal*, to the archdeacon's words, to take away equivocation, because it is in temporal concerns only, that men can be obnoxious to temporal governments.

I have



I have but a word or two more to say to this gentleman, it is not by repeating mass in an unknown tongue, or by the performance of any priestly function, that catholic ecclesiastics can inculcate dangerous or evil principles, therefore it is absurd to say, that catholics are molested in their religious worship on account of political doctrines. If there be no relation or connection between saying mass in latin, and political doctrines, I would fain know by what logic or rules of equity, a man is condemned of disloyal principles, because he says mass, and this in a country where no one ought to be condemned and punished for a crime that is not proved. Mr. Blackburne has confidently passed his word for it, that the popish priests are expressly excluded all subjection to an heretical government, but altho' we suppose that all the puritans of England open or disguised, had joined him in this assertion, I ask the question, ought a mere report, by the spirit of the laws of England, condemn a man to a grievous punishment, without being proved, or without giving him an opportunity of clearing himself?

Having spoken to the substance of Mr. Blackburne's 296 pages, and of Mr. Pye's first letter, as far as they regard the subject of the free examination, I must say something to the last gentleman's four remaining letters.

His second letter is on antichrist. No doubt the caballa he and some other rabbins are willing to hammer out of the revelations, serves the beloved purposes of persecution; for whoever loves Christ, must be an enemy of course to antichrist, and to his followers; and when a man proves the pope to be antichrist, he needs do little more to draw the deadly enmity of all other sects of christians on the execrated papists: but how has Mr. Pye proved his point? why truly he informs his readers, that they may find it very clear in the writings of Newton, and Warburton; of Pierce, and Lowman; in the mild modest Limborch, and what is much more surprising, in Gregory the great, a pope himself, and St. Bernard; that an abbot of Calabria, the christians of the vallies of Piedmont in the 13th century, Wickliff, John Hufs, Jerome of Prague, Martin Luther, and many other protestants are of the same opinion. Thus, he says, he followed

followed the traces of this doctrine through a period of many hundred years, and upon the authority of his patched wandering tradition, he has restored the credit of the doctrine, to the entire satisfaction of his protestant readers.

Letter 3d, is on the gunpowder plot. I will not follow this verbose gentleman, through his ridiculous criticisms on a jesuit's history of England that was never wrote, nor his reveries, on the dispositions that brought the body of the papists of England into the powder plot, of which they never heard until the public discovery. It is sufficient to my purpose to observe, that the tendency of his letter is to prove, that the body of English papists ought to be deemed guilty of the gunpowder plot, notwithstanding they were strangers to it, and did not enter into it.

Altho' there be two palpable misrepresentations of the free examination in the fourth letter, yet, because Mr. Pye in it, has neither attempted to prove that the representation made of the Irish massacre in England by the puritans, who possessed the popish estates, was true; nor yet, to deny the acts of the lords justices, by which they drove the Irish for their lives into the rebellion, and spread it over the nation, I will pass this letter over, in tenderness to my reader, with only one anecdote.

Mr. Pye in the tract of the puritan writers, and of their servile copiers, asserts, that papists lived in great comfort and ease just before the rebellion, and had no provocations given them. The drift of this assertion is obvious; it is necessary in order to beget an opinion that the Irish were driven into the rebellion by principle, and not by resentment or the edge of oppression; and Mr. Pye is not a little chagrined, that the papists do not acquiesce to the testimony of his historians on this head.

He might easily have found the reasons in the free examination, but I will here again inform him and the public, why the Irish papists do not give entire credit to the historians. The catholics of the present day find upon record, acts of parliament passed prior to the rebellion, by which the popish inhabitants of Ireland were fined and imprisoned for their religious worship; they find also, by a testimony that cannot be controverted,  
that

that some years before the rebellion, an inquisition was set up in the kingdom, that stripped them of their paternal inheritances and estates: now whatever degree of credit men may be disposed to allow to historians, yet history may challenge no authority for convincing men that fines, imprisonment, and loss of estate, are not naturally grievances to the sufferers: *that*, is not the object of an historic faith. I believe the sacred writers who inform me, that three faithful Israelites were not hurt in the fiery furnace; but I should never believe any historians, how creditable soever in other respects, who should relate that they sat very much at their ease in the midst of the flames, if I had not been told they were preserved by a miracle. Now since neither Temple, Borlace, Usher, Clarendon, Nalson, Hume, nor Macauley, have been pleased to inform us, that there were any miraculous interposition, to make fines, imprisonment, and loss of estate, pleasing and comfortable to the Irish papist, it must be concluded by the common sense of mankind, not only that the papists precedent to the rebellion, were not in a comfortable situation, but that all these historians gave their testimony in opposition to evident truth, and to the natural feelings of flesh and blood.

I come now to the fifth and last letter, which after the other four, is very curious, and unexpected; I imagined, and I believe every one else who read Mr. Pye's foregoing letters imagined, that his drift in writing them, was to shew the evil effects of the monstrous doctrine of tolerating papists in this kingdom, contended for in the free examination, but in this fifth letter, as if his head were turned in the pause between it and the last, he declaims with equal violence against intolerance, and in the earnestness of his heart, gives an unlucky picture from Voltaire, of a gloomy ecclesiastic, who with merciless bigotry, wrote four letters against toleration, addressed to the community in which he lived. The archdeacon is equally guilty of the same tergiversation. Both their books may be analized into the following assertions, *the papists do not tolerate protestants; wicked papists! cursed intolerance; we English protestants do not tolerate papists; prudent Britons! wholesome intolerance!*

It is easy to see, that the substance of the arguments I have just used, is taken from the free examination; and that these gentlemen made up their books, by barely collecting together the objections answered there, without taking the least notice of the answers. This method of making books, and setting up as authors, I own is very cheap; and I would engage with any bookseller, to make up a large volume thus by the month, to serve either side of any controversy, that has been litigated, without much pains, if my conscience would suffer me. I have now done with their books, and shall take the liberty to observe to them, that Papists are not the only antagonists they have to deal with, deists also look on, and make no small advantage of their errors, it is well known, that deists pretend to assert from universal history, that priests mainly contend for persecution in all countries and ages; that it is their eternal trick, to spin out tenets dangerous to the government they live under, from the religion of the people they design to oppress. They further add, (for there is no stopping the tongue of a deist against the clergy,) that their true design is, to indulge themselves in the measure of vice and laziness that pleases them, and to revenge themselves upon the troublesome enemies that make virtue and attention necessary to them. They further invidiously observe, that such virtue and attention are expected from the clergy of the established church, who are handsomely paid for their pains by the community.

I am not willing to justify the ill-natured censures, deists are so ready to pass upon the clergy; but then it were to be wished, the clergy themselves did not justify them by their conduct—The strictures I just mentioned, are made every day by the enemies of religion, which should be a sufficient caution to ecclesiastics to repress their fury a little, for the sake of the christian cause, which is tottering in their hands. It would probably be advisable also in protestant clergymen, when papists write with remarkable moderation, modesty, and a strong appearance of the love of truth, not to depend too much upon the popular prejudice, and think of satisfying the lookers on by crying out, the insolence! the effrontery! the dull malignant sophistry! the



the merit of such exclamations will at length infallibly be detected. English men think too much to be long imposed upon by them.

A decency and propriety of character seems to require, that christian ecclesiasticks should in their controversial writings discover some symptoms of a christian spirit, a mildness, and an affectionate feeling of the distresses of their fellow-creatures; for instance, what harm can it do to the protestant cause, if a preacher laid out less of his time and labour on inflaming the minds of men, and on searing their hearts to cruelty, and spoke something now and then of the love and forbearance of the gospel? how could it hurt his cause, if he displayed a less proficiency in bitterness and invective, or shewed a willingness to allow papists that worship undisturbed, for which they are answerable to God alone.

It would not be amiss also, if the clergy in their disputes, paid some respect to truth, for truth holds a vast esteem in the world. A hideous representation of papists strongly painted, may have some effect on the mere sensitive part of mankind, but when a candid man sees this representation taken from Burnet, whose falsehoods and misrepresentations were printed off in volumes in this very city, or from other writers who wrote with acrimony against papists, he must consider it as he does the saracen's-head in a sign-post, whose monstrous features were drawn in order to affright, and not because any thing like it ever existed. It must appear to a reasoning man, as absurd to quote protestant authors against papists, or popish authors against protestants, in matters of crimination, as to ask either the plaintiff or defendant in a law-suit, on which side justice lies.

The inscription on the monument of London, is notoriously a false uncharitable accusation, without foundation or colour; but it tends to inspire protestants with two wicked passions, hatred and revenge against papists. What harm can it do the protestant cause to tell the truth, and candidly acknowledge the slander? Oates perjured himself openly, but such were the prejudices and canker of the times, that afterwards upon his evidence, innocent papists were hanged. Now as the blood of those sacrificed papists was wrongfully spilled, would it

is it not become the integrity of christian pastors, to warn their flocks of such cruel prejudices? what hurt can it do the cause of truth, to acknowledge that one of the indubitable marks of antichrist, and the very circumstance from whence his name is derived, is that he shall deny that Christ is yet come in the flesh, consequently that the pope, who pretends to derive his power from Christ, cannot be he? is it not too evident, that men have not integrity or the fear of God before their eyes, who contend, that a large body of people should be condemned for the powder plot, who knew nothing of it? When christian pastors evade the known truth, and struggle to procure credit for known falsehoods, in order to bring distresses and persecution on men, they naturally create a horror and doubt in religious minds, an aversion to religion in the weak, and they confirm deists in their prejudices against christianity, and in their suspicions of the impostures of the clergy.

Those two gentlemen are evidently mistaken in the age they write in, and seem strangers to the gradual change that has happened in human knowledge since the reformation; when that appeared first, men in general were childishly credulous; the tale of pope Joan, the talmud of antichrist, and every other cheat the new ministers thought it their interest to establish, were swallowed, because they hit the genius of the age; but the world is since grown more suspicious, the character of truth is better known, men listen even to the clergy with caution, and venture to smile at the bugbears and artifices of priests. The calvinist fables suffered proportionably by the change, they were evidently grown more contemptible amongst protestants before the free examination was writ, and that work is no more than an effort of the genius of the age we live in, to settle at truth, and to reject fable. It is perhaps as easy a task to bring judicial astrology back to the place it held in learning, or to bring bows and arrows into use in the field, as to restore those fables to their primitive credit. It has been observed that opinions and popular faith have their ages, in which they are irresistible: but when they fall away, it is beyond the power of human efforts to preserve them.

It must be confessed that the gentlemen I have on my hands, thrust themselves very indiscreetly into the present dispute. The writers of the free examination, whatever their religious opinions be, spoke with particular decency and respect of the established religion of their country; and pleaded only for the most limited liberty of conscience and worship for papists. How can such a liberty affect the protestant cause, on whose side so many advantages operate? on the other hand, a'tho' the present restraint of worship be grievous to catholicks, how does it hurt the popish cause? utter excision indeed destroys a religion effectually; but can it be supposed that the zeal of Papists, so well known, will slaken here under a qualified oppression; or that to lay a restraint on their worship, as if it had something of an unaccountable power, will make it less dear to them? I appeal to every one who has got an idea of the bewitching power of persecution over the crowd, or who consults the sentiments of his own heart, if the priest now confined in the king's-bench prison, condemned to a terrible punishment, for only paying his devotion to God, according to the rites of his religion, while he thus remains a spectacle, so like the first preachers of the gospel, suffering with mild and joyful firmness for religion's sake, is not a more dangerous object, than he could possibly be repeating his mass unnoticed and unmolested. He at least demonstrates on his own side, an affecting sincerity and hope, and on the side of a protestant government, what should not be heard in Gath or the streets of Ascalon, that men are in fact and truth, prosecuted and punished in England, for their mode of worship.

It may not be amiss here to state the present dispute, that every one may judge clearly about it. The free examination points out several falsehoods and artifices, that have been made use of purposely to draw the hatred and persecution of protestants on catholicks. The authors of it contend further, that the oppressive Laws made against protestants, by the temporal powers in popish states, wherein the sovereigns have been obliged to maintain doubtful wars against protestants; or that were enacted in neighbouring popish nations, who were  
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witnesses of those struggles between protestants and their sovereigns, and seen so many monarchs dethroned in a few years after the appearance of the reformation, by their protestant subjects, may fairly be attributed to the resentment, the jealousies, and fears, natural to government in all nations, without placing them to the score of religion; and that to attribute these laws to religion, is to recur to a remote, uncertain, and unnecessary cause, where there is a sufficient and evident cause immediately at hand, that operates in the same uniform manner in all nations, whatever their religion be. They also say of the few rebellions that can be charged on papists in protestant countries, that if it can be clearly shewn, that the papists precedent to the rebellion, laboured under such hardships, and causes of disaffection, as usually drive men into violent measures, and into rebellion in most countries, in all ages of the world, whatever their religion be, that it is unfair to overlook the passions of human nature, and attribute such rebellions to popish principles. They also imagine, that when a few wicked men only, of any denomination, engage in a plot or conspiracy, that it is cruel and unjust to condemn the whole body of the sect for it, who knew nothing of the matter. This is the train of reasoning made use of by the free examiners, whence they pleaded, that it is inequitable to punish the papists of England, for the cruelties of the kings of France or Spain, or the Irish rebellion, of which they are as guiltless, as of the prescriptions of Marius and Sylla in old Rome.

Here are two angry protestant ecclesiasticks, who oppose all this directly or indirectly; they seem disposed to stick to the old method of attacking popery by falsehood and artifice, instead of reason and truth, recommended to them strenuously by the free examiners; and one of them, does not hesitate to assert, that it is treachery in the papists, meaning the authors of the free examination, to attempt to persuade them to lay aside their old approved weapons against popery, and trust to new ones of such brittle temper. (Pyc 2d letter, page 29.)

They go on in the old gee-ho! of placing all the oppressive laws and measures in popish states against protestants, to the genius of popery, without making any allowance



allowance for the resentment or fears of government ; and in the same equitable manner, they place the plots and rebellions of papists in protestant states, to a religious principle of rebellion, without allowing any part to the revenge, ambition, or desires of freedom natural to men. They have not indeed been at the least expence of argument or reason, to shew why they lay out of their account on the one hand, the jealousies, and fears of government, or on the other, the passions and vices of human nature ; they wholly depend on the prejudices of their readers, to take it for granted, that catholick kings and states are the most passive and mild things on earth when their prerogatives are attacked, and feel for no interests but those of religion ; that popish subjects have no sense of injuries, and no other vices to tempt them to disloyalty except principle. The end proposed by these pious ecclesiasticks is obvious, they desire to draw an odium on catholicks from their principles, to make an apology for prosecution, and to induce the civil power to deny them the liberty of worshipping God.

Before I finish, honesty and truth require an acknowledgment from me, that some popes in the boundless extravagance of ambition, have challenged a deposing power that was plainly calculated to form an universal monarchy, and to bring the princes of the earth in their temporals under the pontifical yoke ; but their haughty claims, which were opposed and rejected by a great majority of catholics, even in the ages of ignorance and papal gaandeur, are now as utterly antiquated and lost amongst catholic princes and their subjects, as the sovereignty of heathen Rome. In the modern world they appear no where but in a few protestant writers, who at the same time that the pope's authority over the petty states of Italy in his neighbourhood is utterly annihilated, affect to be in mighty terrors about it in the kingdom of England, in order to keep alive the pretence for prosecuting catholics.— It is also undeniably true, that many of the popish clergy have countenanced the horrid spirit of revenge and persecution, and the breach of faith that always attends on the spirit of revenge ; but then, while catholics universally disclaim a principle of persecution

persecution, while they declare their detestation of the doctrine of breach of faith to heretics, and aver, that agreeable to their religious principles, no dispensation can be given for it by any person or power on earth, is it not obvious that the persecution and perfidy of such popish priests, are but the effects of human passions, and ought to be attributed to them. A candid protestant may readily discover the polluted spring from whence they proceed, if he observes, that intoleration takes place in Sweden, Denmark, Geneva, and Scotland, and is violently contended for in England, where freedom has civilized the hearts of men. It is allowed by protestants, that in the countries I mention, there is no principle of intoleration; from whence then comes the spirit of intoleration that appears openly in them all? In Ireland, it is notorious that the whole bench of bishops, and the whole body by whose authority the protestant religion was established in that kingdom, enacted popery laws, that were an open and direct violation of the public faith given to the catholics of Ireland by the articles of Limerick. It is a certain truth, that there never was such a solemn and universal sanction given to perfidy and breach of faith by a national popish church; yet who can doubt, but they ought to be placed to the corruptions of man? such a fair acknowledgment of the general infirmities of human nature, through the whole species, however, will not serve the purposes of criminalizing papists; man therefore must not be considered as the same kind of creature in popish and protestant communities, the passions and vices, the persecution and perfidy, that in the reformed are attributed to human nature, will not be allowed by protestant writers to grow on the same stock amongst catholics, but in them, must be taken for the issue of religious principle. By his species of false and partial reasoning, the two gentlemen I speak to, after a crowd of furious sanaricks, divines, and historians, attempt to prove the principles of breach of faith and intolerance on popery. They find several popish priests guilty of them, and thence they conclude without tracing those vices to their real source, that they are the off-spring of popish principles. They might  
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in the same manner father the breach of all the commandments that were issued in opposition to the vices of men, on the principles of papists, or of christianity itself. A young rhetorician of good parts, I fancy, could work as dismal a tale out of the reformation, as this out of popery; he could trace an intolerant spirit through all the protestant states that ever existed, he could derive it plainly from the clergy, and end it with my two reverend gentlemen, who are the last protestant Inquisitors I find upon record: he could demonstrate that that persecution did not appear amongst the reformed in opposition to popery alone, because the different sects of protestants worried one another as cordially as they did the papists. He could draw a frightful picture of this dire spirit, trampling on compassion, on equity, and even interest, in Ireland, looking with a clouded malevolent joy over the long wastes, and desolated pastures it had made in that fruitful country: He could shew that perfidy and breach of faith went hand in hand with intolerance, since the first reformed preachers gave the fair example, and set out with perjury and breach of vows; he could shew that every state and nation who listened to the voice of the reformation, dispensed immediately with their plighted faith and allegiance. He might amplify, he might exaggerate, and make a long enumeration of provoking circumstances, that may be easily picked up from as many historians as our reverend gentlemen appeal to; but alas! to what end could such a laboured recapitulation conduce, but to enflame the hearts of a party, to lead them step by step to cruelty and malice against men like themselves, when the things wanting on all sides, are compassion and mutual forgiveness to mutual passions and frailties.

As the two writers I speak to, have kept so wide of the arguments offered in the Free Examination, I think it not amiss, to single out to them, and to the publick the points in this postscript, which require a particular answer, that an honest unsuspicious reader may not be imposed upon, for ever and for ever, with the old legerdemain, of making principles for papists, and finding them guilty of doctrines not their own.

1. It is incumbent on a person who takes up his pen to answer the foregoing lines, to give some satisfactory reason to his unprejudiced readers, why the frequent wars carried on by protestant subjects against the popish governments under which they lived, the revolutions they brought about by violence or treachery, and the sovereigns they dethroned in different parts of Europe, do not sufficiently account for the hostile treatment and persecution they suffer in Catholic states, from the civil government, acting by its own proper ordinances and laws, without having any commission from their church for doing so. It is notorious, that the independant and republican principles of calvinist writers, and the warm apologies they make for rebellion and king-killing at this day, menace despotic monarchs, and demonstrate, that their spirit of resistance is not extinct. It is therefore necessary for a writer, who would confute what I said, to shew, that these avowed principles are not cause of perpetual terror and jealousy to sovereigns, and prevalent motives, for absolute governments to take every measure to bar protestants out of the societies they rule over, without recurring to religious principle.

2. My antagonist will also find it necessary to give some reason why the rebellions, seditions, and breach of faith of protestant subjects, should be attributed to the vices or passions of human nature. and it should not be allowed, that catholics have the same natural vices and passions to prompt them also to rebellion and perfidy. When papists are urged by such causes of revolt and disobedience, as naturally tempt men of other denominations to betake themselves to arms, some reason surely ought to be alledged, why the rebellions of papists in such circumstances, should be attributed to principle, rather than to the common motives of rebellion: on the same account a writer who makes the popish principle the pack-horse on which he loads all their crimes, should satisfy his readers, why the persecution, the perfidy, and ambitious designs of some popish ecclesiastics, should not be placed to the account of the same causes in human nature, which produce the persecution, the perfidy, and ambitious designs of protestant ecclesiastics:

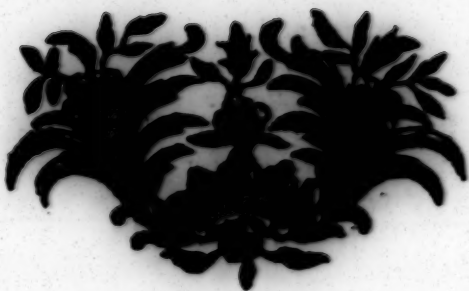
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3. When popish priests, and the whole body of papists, deny a principle of intolerance, and disavow breach of faith to heretics for the interests of their church, with detestation; when they shew, that protestant subjects enjoy a liberty of worship, and the civil rights of society, under several popish governments in Germany, and did enjoy them many years in France, which is an invincible proof, that there is no principle of intolerance in popery; when they shew, that notwithstanding the incendiary impeachments of persecuting calvinists, protestants in general discover a consciousness, that there is no principle of persecution in the catholic religion, and make compacts and conventions with catholic governments, for the free exercise of their religion, and for the other rights of subjects, well knowing, that catholic states, consistent with their religion, may indulge them in such privileges: when the popish priest shews, that by the four famous articles of the French clergy, to which the ecclesiastics of that nation, all subscribe, the deposing and dispensing power of the pope, are as much abjured in France as in England, and that the duty and allegiance he himself professes to a protestant king here, is no more than the result of a doctrine all the ecclesiastics of France and Flanders teach, and subscribe to; I say, when all this appears, my antagonist, who notwithstanding insists, that popish priests are rebellious and intolerant by principle, ought to shew first, by what secret means he sees their hearts and discovers the latent principles of disloyalty and intolerance; next, how is it possible for men to be disloyal, who teach and practice obedience to the government; and lastly, by what rules of good reasoning, men's own professions and doctrines are not to be looked upon as their principles, but rather the doctrine their enemies are pleased to bestow upon them. These are the points an antagonist, who is willing to answer what I have said, has to clear up to the satisfaction of candid readers. When he has shewn, that popish states have no motives on a political account to oppress protestants; when he proves, that popish subjects are not liable to passions and vices like other men, to drive them into rebellion;

then, he may attribute the severity of popish governments, and the disloyalty of popish subjects, to religious principles ; and according to the rules of oratory, and the wrath of his own heart, make a detail of irritating circumstances, to move the magistrate to punish papists for their mode of worship.

END of PART I.



A FREE



A F R E E  
E X A M I N A T I O N , & c.  
P A R T II.

*An ENQUIRY whether Catholics be obliged by their principles to keep faith with hereticks ; wherein are fully examined, the arguments usually alledged in support of the accusation against them, of perfidy to hereticks on principle.*

SOME few days after the publication of the Free-Examination, it happened, as might be expected, to become the subject of our club. A gentleman, who had been in the country for some time before, and knew nothing of the debate amongst us until he read the pamphlet, asserted, that it was written not only in behalf of humanity, of the birth-right of Englishmen, and the spirit of the constitution ; it is, said he, a modest apology for the universal rights of truth and virtue, and a defence of the *Pulchrum & Honestum*, which give human nature its value and excellence. I beg to know, continued he, how we can expect elevated sentiments, public honour, or justice, from a people who seem to place merit and patriotism in the invention and publica-

tion of calumny, and to treat every man as a public enemy, who has virtue enough to do justice to, or speak the truth of catholics? Has not the manner of treating popery given esteem to scandal and detraction, and proportionably discountenanced candour and integrity, and must not the honesty this nation has been in past ages famous for, feel the public wound? In the midst of a torrent of abuse, the Free Examiners have ventured to attack the radical, and most infectious cause of the prevailing degeneracy, but they have done so, in a different spirit from the controversial writings of their time; they wrote with visible marks of a passion for truth and candour; and plead for a helpless people, who are punishable by the laws, for their religious opinions, and their religious worship, without the least proof of their being guilty of any wickedness, even in intention, against God or man. What surprises me is, that the letter-writers in the public papers who appeared against the Free Thinker, seldom ventured to contradict any particular facts or reasonings of his, but unanimously attacked him, by insisting that he is a papist, for attempting to lay open truths which they have not the face to deny. This conduct of theirs, carries his argument much further than he carried it himself, and is really a false insinuation: for it intimates plainly, that no protestant would tell truth of a papist, or represent him fairly; and is a public avowal of the detestable spirit of the calvinists in France, who fell foul on Bayle and Blondell for doing justice to popery. These fools, in their headlong zeal for slander, become evidences of the truth of his general charge, and stand up before the world to prove, that there are men at this day alive, who are willing to have equity and justice refused to papists.

At the end of this speech, *Portius*, a gentleman who before made some objections to *Publius's* discourses, got up, and spoke to the following effect.

Mr. President, I would not favour misrepresentation, nor distress a papist by any means that an honest heart does not warrant. In what I am going to say, I only seek to bring into light truths, the knowledge of which must be useful to the society. If catholics be good subjects



jects and fellow citizens, the enquiry I am setting on foot will be serviceable to them, and I shall look on it as a justification of human nature, and a matter of just pleasure to every benevolent man, that so great a body of mankind, be free from the guilt of a charge that has long lain heavy upon them. The charge I speak of is, that by a principle of their religion, they disengage themselves from the obligation of keeping faith with heretics, and look on the most sacred engagements to be void, when the interests of their religion are to be served. I am aware that papists in their controversies, produce several public and notorious instances of their good faith to people they call heretics ; but I must desire you, Mr. President to observe, that I do not accuse them of universal breach of faith to those who are out of the pale of their church, but only in cases, where the peculiar interests of the church are to be advanced ; and to support this charge, I bring incontestable facts : I might produce a thousand, but I am sensible they occur sufficiently to the gentlemen present, who have read the dreadful memorials of popish treachery in both catholic and protestant writers ; for which reason, I will confine myself at present, to the breach of the public faith given by the emperor Sigismund to John Huss, by the council of Constance, and to the solemn votes of that council ; and of the 4th council of Lateran, which not only absolve subjects from their allegiance to princes who fall into heresy, but enjoin them to take up arms and dethrone them. I select those acts, because they are the public decrees of their infallible church, which they all think themselves obliged to obey under pain of eternal damnation. Protestants then can never repose the least trust in papists ; but in their most peaceable state, must look on them as foes, whom no intercourse of friendly offices can reconcile, and as wild beasts who couch and lie in ambush, waiting for an opportunity to destroy. This is the dire tenet, that forever shuts papists out of the protection of a protestant community, and renders them just objects of unceasing prosecution amongst us. I need say nothing, Mr. President, in aggravation of a doctrine that tramples on natural morality, breaks the chains of society, and frustrates the sacred compacts

which unite man to man for mutual benefit and security. Common sense feels the enormity of it, and with humane anger, arms in behalf of mankind against the miscreants who dare support it.

When *Portius* had finished these words, he sat down with some emotion. The charge was specious, and the challenge spirited. Immediately every eye was fixed on *Publius*, who having considered a minute, turned to the President, and made the following speech.

I agree, Mr. President, with the gentleman who spoke last, whose candour and humanity are well known, that a protestant government can hardly be too severe upon a people who hold the hostile and detestable principle he attributes to catholics. But he must in his turn agree with me, that if the charge be originally false and malicious, then the views of the inventors of it were, to stir up protestants to enmity and eternal injury against catholics, to disserve the followers of Christ past all hopes of reconciliation, and, in protestant governments, to devote the papists to prosecution, and at the same time, to prevent in the breasts of those who hold the sword, the common feelings of commiseration that spring up in favour of the distressed. From the charge before us it is evident then, either that papists are intolerable in every protestant government, or they are diabolically misrepresented in order to urge protestants to an eternal war with them, and to provoke protestant governments to prosecute and exterminate them without pity or mercy. There is no medium; one of those cases is true, and the other false: And to discover which is the true one is, I suppose, the subject of our present enquiry, which I will speak to with the simplicity and honest boldness I have hitherto observed.

Before I enter upon the enquiry, I must take notice that it is nothing to the purpose, whether every papist, or every popish monarch, held strictly to their faith and engagements. Papists have broke their faith with protestants, and they have broke it as often with other papists. No religion can set bounds to the ambition, to the passion of liberty, the resentment, and the interested views of mankind; or take away entirely the effects of a corruption, that is always active, because it resides  
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always in the heart of man. Nothing can put my argument in a fairer light, than to make the protestant and papist change sides in this dispute. Let us for a few moments suppose the papist charging protestants with a principle of breach of faith, and even of dispensing with the most solemn engagements to God as well as to man. "As soon as your pious ministers, says he, took up the principles of your religion, they absolved themselves from the vows they made of chastity, of obedience, and of observing their religious duties, which were particularly tremendous, because they were contracts of the soul with the deity. Your patron and first archbishop of Canterbury in England, after he had imbibed his new principles, made his qualifying vows with duplicity; he went to the altar with a concerted design to perjure himself, and lived after in the most criminal opposition to his conscience during king Henry's reign. The ever memorable and glorious queen Elizabeth, swore at her coronation, to preserve and support the established religion, which oath, she not only broke with the greatest tranquillity, but it appears very plainly from her behaviour, that she only took it for conveniency, and did not intend to keep it when she solemnly swore to do so. This principle advances along with the reformation every where, as close as Milton's death accompanies sin. The sectaries in Scotland and England, had sworn fealty to the king whom they deposed and murdered. The Calvinists of France were in nothing behind their brethren in England, but in success; they were guilty of the same kind of perjury over and over, by the advice and consent of their godly clergy. These rebellions are distinguished from all others, by the perfidious principle I speak of. Look narrowly into the solemn leagues and covenants, look at the declarations of protestant dissidents, and you universally see them set out with the most sacred vows of loyalty to the monarchs, and to the governments they after treacherously destroy, as soon as they have acquired the power of doing so. In short, where ever the protestant religion got footing, it never failed to bring along with it this horrid principle, that has rent so many

ny governments, and torn down so many princes out of their thrones.

A principle that is universal, and meets your eyes on every side, does not require any particular examples to prove it; but the cruel breach of the capitulation of *Montbriffon*, and the massacre of the garrison, is too affecting to be passed over. As soon as *Francis de Beaumont, Baron des Adrets*, a protestant general, who fought for his religious principles, had, under the faith of a capitulation, got the garrison and their brave general into his power, he ordered them to be brought to the top of the platform on the castle, where he diverted himself with looking on them precipitated to the bottom, while his barbarous soldiers received them with shouts of joy and exultation, on the points of their halberds and pikes. But as I said, there is no need of particular instances to prove my argument, pursue the protestant religion in all nations, and you see it instantly dissolve the allegiance of its followers to princes of a different religion, and breach of fidelity followed close by bloodshed, rapine, and desolation.'—Here *Publius* paused a moment, and then continued, you see, Mr. President, that I have made my popish declaimer, run over exactly the same cant of those protestants, who, from some particular facts, charge catholics with a principle of breach of faith; and if I had a mind to spin out the discourse, and imitate those doleful gentlemen, you are convinced that I need only to transcribe from the histories of the different states of Europe, with the addition of an exclamation against protestant treachery and rebellion at the close of every tale, to make out two or three handsome volumes in folio. But after all, is it not a sufficient answer to say, that those instances of protestant breach of faith, are to be placed to the corruptions of human nature, which no religion can eradicate, and not to religious principle, which protestants openly disclaim? For heaven's sake then, allow catholics as well as protestants to be descended from Adam, that both are co-heirs to the same corrupt nature, and may be alike guilty of breach of faith against principle; and that catholics, like them, may be false to their compacts, in opposition to the dictates of their religion, just as both  
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are guilty of covetousness, envy, and drunkenness, which from facts may be proved on every christian sect and communion on earth.

We may here make an easy reflection, that explains the behaviour of men in the case before us. When passion or mundane interest press us in opposition to principle, it must be expected in the course of things, that these mighty and prevalent motives of the heart, will in many instances prove an overmatch for religion: but if there had been no principle to counteract them, they must always guide us without deviation, with the same uniformity that a stream for ever flows down the declivity, and holds its course; wherefore the prevalence of a principle that is publicly asserted, in many thousands of instances, against passion and mundane interests, is a demonstration of the reality of the principle in the mind, whilst the frequent breach of it for worldly motives, is of no weight whatsoever, to prove that such a principle does not exist, and indeed, if the violation of a principle were allowed to be a proof that it does not exist in the mind, it would be very difficult to prove that any one man now upon earth believes the doctrines of christianity to be true, or even that God punishes sinners.

The question that is to be canvassed then, is not whether some papists have been guilty of breach of faith, but whether the principles of popery absolve men from keeping faith with heretics, where the interests of the church are concerned? And when the debate stands at this issue, surely this very controversy, maintained universally by catholics, is a decisive proof that they hold it not as a principle that they may be absolved from keeping faith with heretics, unless protestants will maintain, that the catholics are mistaken in their own tenets, and that the creeds made for them by their enemies are really theirs, and not those they themselves profess; that the public doctrines they teach, print, preach, and eagerly contend for, are not the principles of papists, but another opinion they do not teach, nay, that is utterly disclaimed by them, which is judging the hearts of men, and condemning them against all appearances of truth, and motives of judgment. Should the religious  
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differences which have drawn out to view so black a vein of corruption, be ever permitted by providence to blow over, our descendants no doubt will produce it as a striking instance of the superlative malignity of which the heart of man is capable, that one party in the days of their forefathers, refused to their antagonists the liberty of knowing their own doctrines, but manufactured a system of religion for them against their consent and approbation, and afterwards punished them for that obtruded system; with the same equity, as if I had forced a frightful mask upon a man whose hands were tied behind his back, and then abused him for his ugly face; this might do in a farce, but the reality is such a singular strain of malice and cruelty, as no other denomination of men who ever appeared upon earth were capable of persisting in, besides the calvinists and their natural born issue, the fanatic sects; but whoever reads Hudibras, and knows that he draws the portraits of men who really existed, and practised the religious villainies he paints, will not find this a new picture of the human heart.

But men of profound penetration, who so often for the good of their dear country, have discovered that a British chimney cannot take fire, nor a British mob who are hungry break out into riots for food, unless a Jesuit be at the bottom, will not be put off by public professions of faith. They admit that catholics publicly profess that they are obliged to keep faith with heretics, since the dispute universally held by papists is a demonstration they do so; and when pressed, they will allow that the same doctrine is inculcated in manuals, and rules of faith, printed for the popish laity, because those manuals and rules of faith lie on every stall in London; but they discover with vast sagacity, that all this fair parade, is only made to lull protestants into security and inattention; to give a plausible appearance to their religion, in order to seduce men, and make new converts. It is say they, when the plot is ripe, and hands are wanting for the execution, that popish priests change their notes, and lay open the mystery of iniquity. Then they teach the reverse of the doctrine they pub-  
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lish to the world, and absolve their deluded votaries from their faith, and their mercy to heretics together.

I defy the heart of man, in its most ingenious virulence, to invent a more destructive and envenomed accusation than this, which enables the prosecutors and enemies of papists, to find them forever guilty, notwithstanding the highest, the clearest, and the most durable testimonies of their loyalty and integrity; and gives room to extend the guilt of every single papist to the whole people, while it refuses them any credit, for piety, honesty, and the most inviolated faithfulness to the government. If a papist in power be cruel or revengeful, as far distant as the borders of Turkey, in the neighbourhood of the Cossacs, or beyond the Alps, he is so by principle, it is the fault of his religion, and every professor of it is no better; if in these nations, a desperate or a reprobate papist enters into a plot, or is seduced into one, it is undoubtedly a popish plot, and all the members of that church ought to be extirpated; but while papists continue good subjects, they are so only thro' design or fear, the evil principle lurks within, always ready to appear and do mischief. In short, no virtue, no piety is a defence against the malignity of this charge, that equally involves the good and the wicked. While the persecution of primitive christians continued, it was assiduously inculcated by the heathens that they held in private abominable doctrines, and were guilty of horrid practices, which was as sincerely believed by the populace of the Roman Empire, as it is now in England, that papists have a secret principle of dissolving their faith to heretics. To give such a charge as this weight enough to condemn any party who dissents from the established religion, all that is necessary is, to bring the dissenting party under a public odium, and when this is effectually done, the more horrid and strange the crime be, that is laid to their charge, the readier credit it will meet with from the croud, who never have the power to reflect on, or to examine a story, that sufficiently terrifies them. In the reign of Charles II, it was confidently believed by the body of the nation, upon the information of one or two infamous men, that the general of the Jesuites in Rome,

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was to raise an army in England, and had issued commissions to officers, in order to conquer the nation, and to cut every protestant's throat, from the English channel to the Highlands of Scotland. During the first consternation of the public, several poor papists were hanged, upon evidence that no man in his sober senses would listen to, and a venerable court, judges, and jurymen, believed that in this case contradictions might be true, and gave verdicts accordingly.

To prove that the charge I am speaking to is false, and that papists have no principle public nor private that discharges them from their faith to heretics, I will make use of the very arguments that the ancient christians used, or might have offered, to prove that they were not guilty of the enormous doctrines and practices that were laid to their charge by their heathen prosecutors.

It is publicly allowed by all sects and parties of christians, that the end of christianity is to make men perfect, to give them a love and habit of truth, of holiness, and virtue; and tho' there are probably hypocrites and infidels, who shelter themselves under different denominations of christians, yet it certainly is the belief of the greater number by far of every sect amongst us, that the tendency of christianity is to render them sincere, honest, and virtuous.

To suppose the popish clergy absolve men from their oaths and compacts, in defiance to the main end of the gospel, to the eternal indispensable laws of morality and truth, and in opposition to the perfection and attributes of the divinity, all of which they believe and teach; is to suppose the whole catholic clergy, the pope, cardinals, prelates, doctors, and religious, have entered into a formal conspiracy against Christianity, morality, and the divinity, for the sake of temporal emolument and power. It cannot be pretended that they join in this shocking plot through ignorance. The vast pains they take to exculpate themselves, demonstrate, that if they be guilty, it is a real conspiracy against their consciences, with a full sense of the turpitude and wickedness of it.

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I believe there are few accusers of popery so sanguine, who will not hesitate a little, before they make this criminal charge so universal; but if the superior popish clergy, notwithstanding the great appearances of devotion and sanctity of life of many amongst them, be capable of such an execrable plot, what shall we say of those under-workmen, to whom the carrying it on amongst the people is committed, the inferior clergy, who are so many of them men of exemplary lives, and most severe morals; who bear all hardships, run all hazards, and often suffer death itself for their religion? Are they who, according to this system, are the tools made use of in carrying on the plot amongst the laity, and in vending the dispensations of iniquity, are they deep also in the shocking conspiracy against the God of truth and the gospel? Are they the active enemies of religion, and the wilful perverters of morality? Are they the private tempters to perjury, to rebellion, and to breach of faith, in contradiction to their declared doctrines, professions, and sermons? And do they finally offer up their lives, after suffering imprisonment and persecution, to serve this detestable plot? Surely whoever believes this, cannot defend the apostles and their fellow labourers, who by their preaching, sufferings, and death, propagated the gospel, from the character of designing, ambitious men, who acted for the temporal advantage and glory of their own society. We have no reason to think that men were not as heroic seven-teen hundred years ago, as at any period since. And indeed the gentlemen who discovered the plot amongst the Popish clergy, have put arms into the hands of infidels, against which they have left themselves no defence, wherefore it has happened, that reflecting calvinists universally mistrust the clergy, and that deism treads close on the heels of calvinism in all nations.

Religion is acquired, and the belief of the Son of God crucified has proved a stumbling-block to reason, but the obligations of common morality and truth, are fixed indelibly in the breast. We do not believe them only, we feel their rectitude whether we will or no, and they have not been hitherto eradicated out of any nation on earth. Is it possible then to make people believe

lieve upon any sudden exigency, that true religion absolves them from the obligations of honesty and truth; Can the Clergy silence those ever wakeful dictates of God in a moment? When priests and bishops are first initiated into this secret part of their functions, ought we not to expect that the truly pious and sincere, would instantly quit an impious religion, supported by such criminals means, and go over to the reformation, especially in England and Ireland, where interest also tempts them; for who ever yet refused the invitations of conscience and interest together? And when the clergy who teach and print, and dispute, that faith ought to be kept with heretics, allegiance to protestant princes, and that no dispensations can be given to absolve men from their engagements, come afterwards to discover and teach the reverse; when they lay naked the duplicity and prevarication of their religion, and of the popish clergy, why do not their hearers forsake them with detestation? Why are not their eyes opened to quit a false and hypocritical church? And surely if the discovery had ever been made, it would naturally have that effect. What desertion ought to be under such a striking instance of craft and guile? And might it not be reasonably expected, that the catholic laity upon conviction, that they were so long abused and misled by their hypocritical clergy, would deliver them over with indignation to justice, or tear them in pieces for deceiving them.

Let us suppose the popish plot, and the new doctrine that sanctifies it, on the point of being revealed to the croud, who are to be employed. Let us suppose them assembled, the doors shut, and the Jesuit standing up to make the important discovery.

“ Dear christians, says he, the catholic church require you to get every man a match this night, to set the houses of your protestant neighbours on fire while they are locked in sleep and repose, and to have also a sharp knife, ready to cut their throats as they fly out of the fire. Do not be startled at what I now say, tho’ it shocks the laws of nature and morality, tho’ it contradicts my former professions, the controversy I held with protestants in the face of the world, and the public

lic catholic doctrines, which you heard and read every day, they were only false colours hung out to view, on purpose to deceive. I now discover to you the true doctrine, which is to dissolve all faith with heretics, to break all engagements with them, and to murder them: without mercy, since the interest of our holy church requires it to be so. She who now reveals to you her real principles, is apostolic, righteous, and without spot. You may depend on her absolutions, you cannot be wrong in obeying her, the holy ghost has inspired her to adopt these double principles, to deceive her enemies, and to destroy them in security; and I myself who am the minister of her designs, am a person of such rectitude, that you may safely trust your souls and consciences in my hands." I do not suppose the Jesuit would make use of these words exactly, but that in such case, he must see the necessity of softening and palliating his new doctrines. but this must be the real tenor and drift of his discourse; and unless he has an unknown charm to take away common sense and thought, every person must perceive it, because, to bring men to his present purpose, he must instil into them principles diametrically opposite to the eternal dictates of truth, honesty, humanity, and to his own and his church's daily and public professions.

I see, Mr. President, the hour is come for dissolving the club this night, if it be agreeable to you and the rest of the gentlemen, the present subject, which is of vast importance, shall lie over till the next night, in which I hope to bring it to such an issue, as that we shall have no need to discuss it ever after. This motion was agreed to, and the following club-night *Publius* spoke as follows:

Mr. President, at our last meeting I asserted, that if the church of Rome really taught and defended one doctrine publicly, which was humane, sociable, and agreeable to the indelible laws of honesty, and taught in private the very reverse principle, in support of treachery, cruelty, and rebellion; in that case, all sincere and just men would quit that church with indignation, upon the evidence of their natural, moral ideas, which ever was, and ever will be tacitly employed as the test of  
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true religion. I will this night offer to your consideration, some arguments drawn from facts that are known to every one, and seem to me decisive. I will demonstrate to you, that catholics give the highest testimony of their good faith and sincerity to those they esteem heretics, that ever yet was given by any people of their principles, or that can possibly be given; and that if these testimonies be not admitted, we know not, and are destitute of all means of knowing, that any party of men ever held any principle whatsoever.

A few words shall serve my purpose. It has been observed in the Freethinker's letters, that the catholics in England pay double taxes, and lie under several incapacities and restraints; and that in Ireland, besides incapacities, loss of power, and restraints, they suffer by gavel, informations and the premiums offered to children for flying in the faces of their parents, and distressing them in their circumstances. The truth is, catholics in that kingdom are slaves; debarred of all hopes of fixed property, and bear an endless variety of insults and grievances, by the pressure of the penal laws; which are contrived with ingenious cruelty, and are notoriously known to be tortured and strained against them, as far as the shadow of a meaning can reach. It is also notorious, that if catholics could dispense with sincerity to protestants, and by principle impose upon the government, they would by taking the tests required, avoid all those evils and inconveniences. Can any one in his senses doubt, that a man is strongly chained by a principle of keeping faith with heretics, when he is led by it, to break through the greatest and most seducing motives of this life, when he sacrifices to it his views of pride, of power, and riches, and for its sake, weds himself to the last worst, companions on earth, contempt, and the insults men must bear in poverty? When the catholics of England refused to take the oath of supremacy, which would be attended by so many advantages, they gave the best pledge imaginable of the sincerity of the voluntary proposal they made, to take the oath of allegiance. Accordingly, in King Charles I's reign, those who stopped at no test, and swallowed oaths



oaths as the earth does summer showers, entered with equal readiness into the rebellion, whilst the catholics who chose rather to lose the favour of the government, than to take the oath of supremacy, unanimously exposed their lives and fortunes for the king.

You may think I am not serious when I ask you, what security have the public, that the representatives of the people, and the lords in parliament, are not many of them papists, who have received dispensations, to take every test, and to profess outwardly the protestant religion? It is certain, no worldly policy could advance the popish interests more effectually in this island, and considering the venality of very many of our boroughs, and the vast zeal of papists in the support of their religion, there is the greatest reason to fear in this case, if the faith and oaths of catholics to a protestant government be not to be depended upon. But in fact, no one suspects the legislature, or has fears of this kind; and the security of the public can arise from no other cause, than a thorough conviction and knowledge, that catholics are singularly tender in taking oaths, and will not trespass upon their integrity to the government, upon any account whatsoever. I observed last night, that the moral sense we have of truth and honesty will not bear with known prevarication and wilful duplicity; yet, it is certain, that man is capable, through inculpable weakness of making two inconsistent judgments at the same time, the one founded upon prejudice or prepossession inculcated by theory or system, the other the judgment of common sense, impressed by fact and experience. It is visible to every observer, that predestinarians who have argued themselves into their distinguishing tenet, hold it only upon the surface of theory, but never suffer it to enter into their behaviour or judgments of fact. The impulsive feeling they have of their own liberty, always decides in the affairs of life, and they are in regard to their wives, their children, their servants, their creditors, and, in short, to the rest of the world, as firm believers of free will as their neighbours, which by the by, is the true reason why they do not plunge into all kind of guilt, for when they come to action, theory falls before a stronger evidence. The same inconsistency also  
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appears in the judgments of the enemies of catholics. In theory and in the oppression for which the theory was originally calculated, they find catholics guilty of a principle which renders them faithless and insincere to a protestant government; but in every other view and application to real life, they judge the reverse. The legislatures of both England and Ireland, by the tests, the inabilities, and penalties they enacted against papists, gave the most unfeigned and naked testimony, that they were always well assured, that catholics by principle held faith with heretics, because those tests were of no effect to a man who can dispense with oaths, and impose on heretics, or who could hold up one set of principles to the public, and retain another in private. These acts therefore, demonstrate the real sense of the legislature, and their operation incontestably prove, that they were not mistaken in the sincerity of papists.

In Queen Elizabeth's reign, most, or all, of the clergymen of the church of Rome after conviction, and under sentence of death, were offered their pardon, provided they acknowledged the Queen's supremacy. Here was a bribe of infinite more weight than the empire of the world. the bribe of life offered for a violation of the integrity of papists to a protestant government, yet those priests in general refused to accept of it, and chose rather to suffer death. A bigotted papist would say, that these public offers bore legible signals of the divine mercy and justice that permitted them, and that while they demonstrated to every man who had not fenced his heart round about against the approaches of conviction, that catholics were by their religious principles obliged to suffer all things, and death itself rather than dispense with the truth; they were also a dreadful witness against the consciences of those who obstinately, in defiance to common sense and daily experience, persisted to charge catholics, with a principle of breach of faith to heretics.

In Germany, the experience protestants have of the fidelity of catholics by principle, has a very different effect. Instead of extorting forfeitures, penalties, and fines out of the sincerity of popish subjects, they treat  
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them as countrymen and fellow-citizens, and employ them in defence of their common country, against popish as well as against protestant enemies and invaders. The king of Prussia's, and his majesty's popish officers and soldiers, fought as faithfully for them against the the French and Austrians, as their protestant subjects did. In Switzerland protestant and popish cantons are united in a common confederacy. They have differed about interests and about religion, but the protestant cantons never objected a principle of the breach of faith to the catholics, inconsistent with their mutual association, and when their differences were compromised, they united as before, under the security of their faith. Those hide-bound gentlemen in England and Ireland, who have closed every pore against conviction, have been publicly challenged over and over, to shew that the catholics in the British dominions differ in their religious principles from the catholics on the continent; and to produce a reason, why they should merit the confidence of a protestant government there and not here. But no challenge, no force of honest truth, nor prevalence of shame, has been able to extort an answer from them. Truth and shame only wring from them torrents of abuse and resentment, for displaying the iniquity of which they will not repent. They give manifest symptoms that they feel the truth, not indeed by conviction and candid justice, but by a reprobate and eternal enmity and rage against it. I speak only of the virulent enemies of the known truth.

At the revolution, when the minds of men in England were inflamed, and their fears of papists wrought up to a degree of distraction and fury, kind providence with the parental care of heaven, brought king William from Holland, and by a secret chain, led the august house of Hanover from Germany to the throne of England, to rescue an innocent and prostrate people from popular madness. King William had brought over troops of catholics promiscuously with protestants, to support him against king James; and the princes of the house of Hanover, had themselves experience of the strict fidelity of papists, and were witnesses of their loyalty to protestant sovereigns all over Germany. The foaming declamations

declamations concerning the dangers from papists, and their principle of treachery to protestant governments, were therefore lost upon them, and you might as reasonably hope to make a German prince believe that catholics were all born with two heads, as that they held such principles. The artifices that were employed to contradict the evidence of their senses, only raised their compassion to their distressed subjects; whence it has happened, that during the reign of these auspicious monarchs, the inveterate laws made under former kings ceased to rage, and the catholics of these islands found at length that they had both a king and country.

Let us now sum up the evidence catholics give, that they keep good faith with heretics by principle. They unanimously profess the indispensable obligation they lie under of doing so, and as unanimously disclaim the contrary, of which their disputes with their accusers, as well as the printed instructions for the popish laity, are a perfect demonstration, by adhering to the principle of sincerity they profess, they suffer in England and Ireland the loss of power and property; they suffer penalties, and a variety of hardships and exclusions; they pay double taxes in England, they suffer the public odium, and they have in numberless instances suffered death itself, and sealed their integrity with their blood; and in foreign countries, where they are trusted and used as subjects, they defend their protestant sovereigns with their lives against popish invaders. After these proofs which are public before the world, I here demand, what other evidence do their accusers require of the sincerity of catholics to protestants, or what higher and clearer instances were ever yet given by any body of people of their principles? And further, if these proofs be not admitted, I would fain learn, what means beside are there left of knowing that any people on earth ever held any principle, or what grounds of certainty have we, that the apostles and first martyrs of christianity, held interiorly and in good faith the religious principles for which they suffered persecution and death.

In confuting the accusation, one can hardly avoid fixing his thought sometimes on the accusers, who without a single argument of weight, urge so desperate a charge



in the face of the world. It is easy to distinguish them into two kinds of people of different dispositions; the really sincere, and the wilful adversaries of truth,

The bulk of mankind seem formed to believe any thing which they are frequently told. A French writer, I now forget, says with great justness, that common sense is a rarer quality than is usually imagined. Every one lays claim at least to that negligent appearance of wisdom, and he thinks himself very modest who makes no higher demands on the opinion of his acquaintance. Yet when a reflecting man observes the credulity of the world, and the inability of the generality of our species, to discover the weakness and absurdity of the reigning vulgar opinions, he must be tempted to suspect much the universality of that common sense, which is so liberally dealt about by those who have least of it.

Amongst the various species of absurdities that are brooded daily by mankind, there are none propagated so easily, as the silly stories that are told to the disadvantage of an adverse party in religion or the state. Mr. Addison had an eye to the credulity with which men swallowed misrepresentations of this kind, in his own times, when in the Indian king's letter home, he writes of two very dangerous animals who then invested England, against whom he (the Indian king) was warned frequently to be upon his guard, the one called *Whig*, and the other *Tory*; but he thanks God he had not seen any of either kind.

Knights-errant, enchanted castles, and adventures, are long out of doors. Witches, fairies, and goblins are pretty much in discredit with the polite part of the nation, and in their stead, massacres, dire tales, ruefully told, and spectres of popery that will make you look about you and tremble, are the present mode of credulity in Britain, they bear the stamp of the present times, and such is the prevalence of the mode of belief, and the power of the reigning opinion, that some hundreds of thousands in this island, who have an implicit faith in all the absurd legends which the puritan malice invented of popish plots and popish murdering principles, at the same time violently suspect the gospel, surrounded with all its miracles and authority.

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The many, undoubtedly believe those tales without any ill design, and I would be glad to attribute them wholly to the unpremeditated vagaries of the mind of man, which seems to require some object of wonder to toss about. But what shall we say to those shocking exemplars of human corruption, who betray anger and malevolence against a person, who candidly proves the legends that draw injuries and the hatred of the public on papists to be false? What shall an honest heart think of the champions of slander, who desperately and in agonies struggle with the truth, to keep it back from light, when it tends to let an English catholic taste of the liberty of conscience, and the social blessings he sees round him, and on all sides within his reach. For it would be a common consolation to be oppressed any where else, but in Britain, the land of liberty, to be prosecuted for meer sincerity in religion, has something peculiarly distressing.

Every one who reads the daily papers, has frequent opportunities of observing the unwearied labours of this diabolic spirit, to poison the humanity of the nation, and to sow the seeds of prosecution and enmity. The forged letters which are the crop of one year, written in the character of popish ecclesiastics to their friends abroad, in which they are with stupid malignity made to boast of the doctrines and practices laid to their charge, would make a large volume. Another ingenious contrivance of opening popish plots, borrowed from the old shift of the stage, is to overhear a private discourse, wherein the whole mystery is betrayed. Altho' this kind of gross juggling be well understood by the reflecting few, yet it leaves an impression on the mind of the croud, and gradually fixes those traces that form the mode of thinking, which without the least proof, is mistaken for knowledge and certainty. Few are so ingenious as to reflect, that probably the same malice and artifice that is apparent in the method of propagating the charge, were original inventers and parents of it. A humane Christian who takes into his account the cruel tendency of those artifices, and the consequences, is puzzled to know who are the objects of pity, the accusers or the accused, wronged innocence, naturally and

as it were by force begets our compassion; but the case of those lost men who tempt the public to guilt, and who list themselves in the service of the accuser and adversary of mankind, is also humiliating and fearful. What conspicuous images are they of blasted and defaced humanity, and of the ruined state of fallen man.

Having shewn in the former part of my discourse, that catholics give, in their actions, the most unexceptionable testimony of their sincerity, by principle, to heretics, that can possibly be given, let us pass forward to the case of John Hufs, and to the decrees quoted against them from the councils of Constance and Lateran. In going over those subjects, I first propose to prove, that the power assumed by the council in John Hufs's affair, has been challenged and exercised constantly by most protestant churches, who, in similar cases, act as the council did, and defend the exercise of their jurisdiction, just as catholics do the conduct of that council: And secondly, I will demonstrate, that in the trial, censure, and condemnation of *John Hufs*, the safe conduct granted him by *Sigismund* was not violated by the council. Having proved these two propositions, I will proceed to consider the decrees complained of, which are attributed to the councils of Constance and Lateran.

The power of inflicting spiritual censures by virtue of commission from Christ, is taught, defended, and exercised by almost all protestant sects on earth. It is out of my way to enquire, with the Bishop of Bangor, whether such an authority be consistent with the essential principles of the reformation; I am only laying before you what is, and not what ought to be done. I require only your attention to matters of fact.

The modest church of England, excommunicates in the name of the Lord. It is true, she enjoys this prerogative under the sanction of an act of parliament, but the parliament neither meant, nor declared, that the religion they established by law was merely political, and that they, by their own sole authority, communicated a power to the clergy to judge men, and to expel them from the Church; they only added the legal authority to a religious scheme, which they judged to be contained in the scriptures. But no party of christians ever held

up the ecclesiastical authority higher than the calvinists. When that righteous generation had beat down the civil power in England in the cause of the Lord, they persecuted the established church with uncommon rigour. In Scotland they opposed the jurisdiction of both king and parliament, and the consistories, with Roman firmness, declared their religious prerogative. When the surprisal and seizure of king James at Ruthven, in 1582, in favour of the clergy, was by advice of the three estates of the realm declared to be treason, an assembly of the ministers and elders at Edinburgh opposed them vigorously, and ordained all those to be excommunicated, who should defend the declaration of the states. The synod of Dort, at which were present ministers and ambassadors from all the protestant princes and republics in Europe, exercised the power of censuring doctrines, and of condemning and excommunicating heretics with a witness; in consequence of its decrees, some of the greatest men in Holland suffered death; a warm persecution against the Arminians followed over the united provinces, and France, in her turn, gave an asylum to heretics.

*Calvin* himself, with unconquered vigour, supported the ecclesiastical power against the state. The council of two hundred at Geneva had by a decree reserved the final judgment in the causes of excommunication, and the absolution of excommunicated persons, to the senate. One *Bertelier*, who had been before excommunicated, in consequence of that decree, petitioned the senate to be absolved, who accordingly granted him letters of absolution. But *Calvin*, when he heard it, mounted the pulpit, where he announced with great vehemence of voice, and with lifted hands, that he himself would imitate *St. Chrysostome*, that he would oppose force to force, and rather be massacred, than present the holy mysteries to those who had been adjudged unworthy of them. The result was, that *Calvin* obliged the senate to resign their spiritual power.

We find then, that the prerogative of censuring doctrines, and of excommunication, are vindicated as a peculiar ecclesiastical authority, by the most respectable protestant churches; and that they would agree with  
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the council of Constance, that no privilege, or safe conduct granted by the civil power, can make void their divine commission, so as to free a man from excommunication, who is supposed to incur it, or to exempt doctrines really heretical and censurable, from being condemned; now the council of Constance proceeded no farther against John Hufs, they censured his doctrines, they declared him an heretic, they excommunicated him, and afterwards they delivered him up to the emperor *Sigismund*, who had it then in his power to save his life, and make good the free conduct he had given. I will not take upon me to defend the emperor in putting Hufs to death, nor here to enquire whether it could be supposed to be the meaning of the free-conduct he obtained, that he should escape, altho' found guilty by the council; we shall be better able to make a judgment of that matter presently; however, it appears very plain from the emperor's behaviour and speech to the council, before the conviction of Hufs, that he was afraid of the return of that unfortunate man to Bohemia, and secretly wished for his *exit*. "There is not a single opinion of his, says *Sigismund*, that does not call for the punishment of fire. If therefore he does not retract all, I am for having him burned; and even tho' he should obey the council, I am of opinion he should be forbid to preach and teach, or ever to set foot again in the kingdom of Bohemia, — where he has a strong party." The enterprizes of *Ziska* and *Taborites* soon after, demonstrate that the emperor, whether he was an honest man or no, was no despicable politician, and that he perfectly comprehended all he had to fear from the spirit and tendency of Hufs's doctrines.

Having made it appear beyond all contradiction, that the council did not in the exercise of their jurisdiction, go beyond the ecclesiastical powers that are challenged and assumed by the most respectable protestant churches, especially the calvinists, and that the latter defend their spiritual authority under a divine commission, just as the council and all catholics do, I now proceed to demonstrate, that the safe conduct given by *Sigismund* to John Hufs was not at all violated by the council in his trial, or condemnation.

Upon the very face of this affair, it is plain to the understanding of every one, that the safe conduct was neither desired by John Hufs, nor given by Sigismund, in order to secure the former from a tryal, and ecclesiastical censures. But to judge clearly of this affair, let us step back, and take a view of the circumstances necessary for our information. Here is a copy of the passport, I have taken from *L'Enfant* the calvinist writer of the history of the council of Constance.

Sigismund, by the grace of God, King of the Romans, &c. To all princes as well ecclesiastical as secular, &c. We affectionately recommend to all of you in general, and to every one of you in particular, the honourable master John Hufs, B. D. and A. M. the bearer of these presents, going from Bohemia to the council of Constance; whom we have taken into our protection and safeguard, and into that of the empire. Desiring you when he comes amongst you, to receive him well, and entertain him kindly, furnishing him with all necessaries for his dispatch and security, whether he goes by land or water, without taking any thing from him or his, at his coming or going out, for any sort of duties whatsoever; and to let him freely and securely pass, sojourn, and repass, and providing him, if need be, with good passports, for the honour and respect of his imperial majesty. Granted at Spire, the 18th of October, 1414, the thirty-third of our reign, as king of Hungary, and in the 5th as king of the Romans.

By order of the king.

and underneath,

Michael de Paicest, canon of Breslaw.

The very end and design for which this passport was granted to John Hufs, and the end which he proposed in his journey to Constance, was to take his trial for heresy. In the writing he caused to be set up at the door of the royal palace, directed to the king and queen, before he set out, or obtained a passport, he declared his intent to make his appearance in the council, where the pope was to preside, and invited every one who suspected

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ed him of heresy, to repair thither and demonstrate before the pope and the doctors, whether he held and taught any false, erroneous opinion. And in the writing he fixed up at Nurenbeg, on the way, he declared he was going to answer all things that might be laid to his charge at Constance, as he did before at a synod held by the archbishop of Prague. It is evident then, that the safe-conduct was not desired by him, nor granted to him with an intent to protect him from a trial and from the judgement of the council, but for that very purpose, that he might proceed without molestation, be tried, and adjudged there. So that the safe-conduct was in no-wise infringed by the trial, condemnation, and censure. He had been publicly accused of a crime, he of his own accord surrendered himself to take his trial for it upon the public faith, accordingly no injury was offered him until he came under the jurisdiction of the court to which he appealed, and he after suffered nothing, but what was strictly agreeable to the laws of the empire, which he perfectly knew in that case before he went to Constance. And that this was universally understood at that time by all parties is further evident from hence, that all the emperor complained of was, the imprisonment of John Hufs before his trial; that neither John Hufs, nor Jerome of Prague, charged the council with violating the safe-conduct, and that in a few years after the *Hussites*, when they had procured a sufficient protection in writing from the council and the emperor, went in perfect security to the council of Basil, without any suspicion of breach of faith, which they must have been sensible of, if the council had been guilty of it. It was when rebellion was in meditation in after times, and there appeared a necessity of raising in the breasts of men an incurable mistrust of the church of Rome, that this scandal appeared useful, and was propagated. It was laid also hold on by the Calvinist ministers, for the very same purpose. You can now judge, whether the emperor did or did not violate the public faith, by the execution of Hufs, when you consider the purport of the safe conduct, and that Hufs before his surrender, knew the laws of the empire, in case he should

he found guilty of heresy; for my part, the discussion is a matter of no concern to me.

I believe it appears very clearly to you from what I have said, notwithstanding the disingenuous clamor of the calvinists, that the authority exercised by the council is conformable to the doctrine and practice of most protestant churches. For it must be remembered, that the execution of John Hufs, was an act of the civil and not ecclesiastical power, and that the council of Constance did not, by any act of theirs, violate the safe-conduct given to Hufs, unless you judge his imprisonment before his trial to be a violation of it, which is very immaterial, otherwise than as it prevented him from absenting himself, and evading an open discussion and trial, when he found it probable he should be condemned. However, the calumny against the council served the ends of those gentlemen who raised and eagerly supported it for daily bread, and to render a rupture incurable, that secured them the comforts of life; when the calvinist laity were once persuaded that catholics kept no peace with heretics, there was an end of all overtures of peace and accommodation, and nothing remained on their side, but jealousy and unceasing hostility. Let me here, once for all, tell you my reason for singling out all along the calvinists, and, when I am more particular, the calvinist ministers, for the great authors and defenders of slanders against papists. The other reformed churches in general set out under the sanction of the civil power, but the calvinist ministers, and other fanatics who derive under them, set out upon their own bottom; for the most part they encountered the civil power, and had no resource but in the prejudices and hatred they raised in the populace against the party they attacked. The outcry against the clergy of the church of England, while the great rebellion was in meditation, and whilst it was carried on, was no more than the echo of what the calvinist ministers in France, raised against the national clergy there. Their resource to arm the populace was every where slander, and the papists felt it more only, because they were most in their way. Let us now turn our attention to the doctrine



trine attributed by protestants to the council of Constance, and to the fourth council of Lateran.

There are two decrees complained of by protestants, which they attribute to the council of Constance. I have taken copies of them from L'Enfant. I have also taken a copy of the decree charged to the council of Lateran from Collier. I will read them first, and then we will consider them.

1. "The present synod (of Constance) declares, that every safe-conduct granted by the emperor, kings, and other temporal princes to heretics or persons accused of heresy, in hopes of reclaiming them, ought not to be of any prejudice to the catholic faith, or to the ecclesiastical jurisdiction; nor to hinder, but such persons may, and ought to be examined, judged, and punished, according as justice shall require, if those heretics shall refuse to revoke their errors, even tho' they should not have come thither; and the person who shall have promised them security, shall not in this case be obliged to keep his promise, by whatsoever tie he may be engaged, when he has done all that is in his power to do."

I am now to read the second decree imputed to this council. 2. "Whereas, there are certain persons, either ill disposed or otherwise, beyond what they ought to be, who in secret and in public, traduce not only the emperor, but the sacred council, saying, or insinuating, that the safe-conduct granted to John Hufs, an arch-heretic of damnable memory, was basely violated, contrary to all the rules of honour and justice, tho' the said John Hufs, by obstinately attacking the catholic faith, in the manner he did, rendered himself unworthy of any manner of safe-conduct or privilege, and although, according to the natural, divine, and human laws, no promise ought to have been kept with him, to the prejudice of the catholic faith, the sacred synod declares by these presents, that the said emperor did, with regard to John Hufs, what he might and ought to have done, notwithstanding his safe-conduct, and forbids all the faithful in general, and every one of them in particular, of what dignity, degree, pre-eminence, or condition, state, or sex they may be, to speak evil in any manner, either of the council, or of the king, as to what passed

in regard to John Hufs, on pain of being punished without remission, as favourers of heretics, and persons guilty of high-treason."

Now we come to the obnoxious canon charged to the fourth council of Lateran.

" Let secular powers be addressed, and solicited, and, if need be, compelled by ecclesiastical censures, to take an oath to use their utmost endeavours, to exterminate all heretics out of their territories; and that for the future, all persons without exception, at their first promotion or accession to any spiritual or temporal jurisdiction, shall be obliged to swear this canon. — And if any temporal lord shall refuse to purge his country from heretical pravity, after he has been advertised and admonished by the church so to do, he shall be excommunicated by the metropolitan and his suffragans; and in case he contemns the discipline of the church, and refuses to make satisfaction within a year, his contumacy is to be certified to the pope, who, upon such information, shall declare his vassals or subjects absolved from their allegiance, invite the catholics to seize the country, and enjoy it after the expulsion of the heretics, with a proviso, however, for saving the right of the sovereign to the fee, upon condition that the chief lord gives no discouragement to the enterprize, nor throws in any obstruction to prevent the execution of the canon. The same method of discipline is likewise to be observed towards those who have no superior Lord."

I must ask leave to break from the order I read them in, and speak first to the two last, because they have no manner of authenticity, and it is out of the power of argument to bring them into any degree of credit. The last of the three ascribed to the fourth council of Lateran, is not found in any copy coeval with the council, but is, says Collier in the fifth book of his first volume of ecclesiastical history, transcribed from a later record. In fact, it was first produced to light by a german, some hundreds of years after the time of the council, who found it in a manuscript compiled by somebody he knew not who. Neither was the second decree I read, which is attributed to the council of con-

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stance, found in any printed or authentic collection. It is only transcribed by *L'Enfant*, the calvinist writer, from a manuscript copy found in the Vienna library.

What renders these two decrees utterly trifling and impertinent, and ought to have silenced every objection concerning them is, that the catholics reject them. A few popish schoolmen indeed, Bellarmine, Mariana, Suarez, and Sanctorellus, gave credit to the act ascribed to the fourth council of Lateran, just as some catholics were imposed upon by the fable of pope Joan, and reasoning agreeably thereto, gave countenance to the deposing power, under several restrictions however, which protestant writers shamefully pass over in silence, that reduce the deposing power to much narrower bounds, than protestants themselves set to it. Yet these schoolmen were in their own church looked upon as the Calvinists, the Knoxes, and Buchanans of popery. Their propositions were condemned in the universities of Paris, Valentia, Thoulouse, Poitiers, Bourdeaux, Bourges, Rheims, and Caen. In the year 1626, the sacred faculty at Paris condemned the proposition of Sanctorellus, that the pope could depose kings guilty of heresy, and declared it to be new, false, erroneous, contrary to the word of God, calculated to bring an odium on the see of Rome, to impair the supreme civil authority that depends on God alone, and to disturb the public tranquillity. I may be asked how came the catholic universities, and the faculty of divinity at Paris, to rise up against the direct consequences of this canon, even before the slow hand of time discovered it to be spurious.

To answer this question I must observe, that there are two principles at the foundation of popery, that give men light into their duty both to the ecclesiastical power, and to the commonwealth. The one is, that the supreme power in all civil societies, whether lodged in the hands of one, or of the many, is derived immediately from God, and subject to him alone; and the other is, that the authority of the pope, and even of the whole church, is confined to matters of faith and morality; and that her jurisdiction is purely spiritual,

inasmuch that churchmen cannot accept of temporal authority, otherwise than by becoming temporal sovereigns or magistrates, and deriving their civil powers under the temporal supremacy. That is, they cannot graft what belongs to the temporal power into the divine spiritual commission, and alter the boundaries God set to each. Therefore, all the acts of pope or council, concerning the prerogatives or disposition of civil government are extrajudicial, and beyond the limits of their sphere; and were this spurious decree that is fathered upon the fourth council of Lateran genuine, it would only prove, to reflecting catholics, that the fathers of that council strayed beyond the limits, within which only they themselves pretend to power and infallibility. Nothing can put what I say in a clearer light than the reception the council of Trent has met with. Its decisions of faith are received by all catholics, and it would be avowed heresy to refuse them; but many of its canons and constitutions, which regard matters different from faith, are not received to this day in many catholic countries, and yet this refusal is not in the popish church accounted disobedience, but the right and prerogative of temporal power.

These two great and radical principles of popish subjection, can never be suppressed. The universities I mentioned a while ago decided agreeably to them. In the year 1682, a general assembly of the clergy of France published a declaration, by which they assert that the pope's power is purely spiritual, and that he has no authority, directly or indirectly, over the civil or temporal concerns of princes. After the death of Sebastian king of Portugal, Philip king of Spain claimed the succession, as several other princes did, under several titles. Pope Paul IV. endeavoured to have the cause of the competitors tried before himself, but the king of Spain having consulted the most famous divines of the kingdom, they declared, that the pope had no jurisdiction or authority in the decision of worldly possessions, because all power and jurisdiction that concern temporal affairs, belong to the supreme civil authority.

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That the deposing power is refuted with invincible arguments, and condemned in the course of divinity in all the universities in France, I appeal to all the tracts of divinity taught in the French universities. They are publicly printed, and nothing is easier than to confute me if I do not speak the truth. I particularly appeal to the course taught usually in the university of Paris, entitled *Prælectiones Theologicae de ecclesia Christi, quas in Scholis Sor'onicis habuit Honoratus Tournelly*, tome 2. and article 4. wherein ecclesiastics are instructed to explode the deposing power, and to inculcate subjection and fealty to heathen or heretic princes. There are some thousands of them to be sold at the booksellers shops in Paris; and I have more than once seen them on the stalls in London.

When the pope's bull was published against queen Elizabeth, the catholic clergy then in England could not assemble, but their principals suggested to the catholic noblemen and gentlemen what they had to do. They did not await to repel the bull with arguments only, they offered to defend her with their lives against the pope or any other popish invader, and the catholics of England have constantly made the same declaration of their principles down to this day.

In Britain, they are the protestants only, who attempt to give these two decrees any authenticity, and to establish them for popish canons. If indeed the papists held them, or assented to them, then protestants have cause to fear their operation: but for heaven's sake gentlemen, what mischief has any person to apprehend from canons, which no papist in England believes or assents to? After all the pains L'Enfant took to give some appearance of legitimacy to the decree he found in the manuscript of Vienna, is it not a satisfactory answer from a papist, and fully sufficient to justify his principles on that head, to say; "I am still persuaded this decree is spurious, your exposition of it is directly contrary to the doctrine of the church, which is, that I am indispensably obliged to keep faith with heretics, with heathens, and even atheists." If indeed, since all catholics on earth profess and assert that they are obliged to keep faith with heretics, the decision and  
practice

practice of the council of Constance were produced, to prove that the council wanted infallibility, it would have the appearance of argument, but they never can be produced to prove, that the past or present race of catholics believed or taught tenets, which they do not believe nor teach, and the reverse of which they loudly publish in their controversies. their catechisms, their rules of faith, and school-divinity. It is certain that christians had not any council since, better authenticated than that of the apostles in Jerusalem. Yet I ask you gentlemen, are the decrees of that council sufficient to persuade mahometans or heathens at this day, that it is a principle of christianity, to abstain from blood, or from things strangled? No records, however venerable or authentic, are of any validity to make a doctrine pass for men's belief, which they do not believe, or to prove that they assent to what they maintain positively to be false.

Let us now canvass the decree of the council of Constance which is authentic, and received by catholics. It is the first I recited. There it is asserted, that every safe-conduct granted by the secular power to heretics, or to persons accused of heresy, ought not to be of any prejudice to the catholic faith, or to the ecclesiastical jurisdiction; nor to hinder, but such persons ought to be examined, judged, and punished as justice shall require, and that the civil magistrate is not obliged to keep his promise, seeing that he has engaged beyond the extent of his authority, provided he has done all in his power to keep that promise. The simple meaning of the decree is readily understood by every one who has an idea of the independent power challenged by most christian sects and parties, to try and censure heretics and heresy.

But some protestants confound the obvious meaning of this decree, in order to find in it a liberty given to catholics to break faith with heretics, and to cancel the fealty they owe to a protestant government. Here, Mr. President, is a comment with a witness. But unfortunately for the comment, the express words of the decree are diametrically the reverse; for it declares the  
magistrate

magistrate freed from his promise only, after he has done all in his power to fulfil it.

Whenever we see men labour with obstinacy against the clearest decisions of reason, and proof against all conviction, we may safely conclude there is at bottom some interest that warps them; and I believe it is pretty obvious to every man, who is sufficiently clear of prejudice to judge calmly in this matter, that the calvinist ministers who defend this perverse meaning against the exposition of catholics themselves, would be unwilling to believe an angel from heaven, or the fathers of the council themselves, if they should arise from the dead to determine their own meaning and principles. The fathers of the council of Constance did actually determine, and publish their sense and principles on this very head, and continue to this day to publish them to the world. Let me lay open to you this circumstance, which deserves so much to be taken notice of, and covers with shame all those who endeavour to make the council of Constance favour breach of faith to heretics.

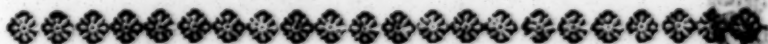
Amongst the principles of the Flagellants, a sect censured by this council, L'Enfant recites the following 17, "That although all oaths, after what manner soever taken, were prohibited, yet it was better the Flagellants should be sworn, and forsworn before the inquisition, than that they should betray themselves and their brethren, seeing that perjury might be expiated by Flagellation." I mention this tenet, because the act of the council I am just going to produce seems to have a view to it.

There was a bull published by the authority of the council, and sent to all the countries suspected of heresy, which in the acts of the council of Constance, published at Haguenau in 1500, bears this title, "The errors of Wickliff of England and of John Hufs of Bohemia, condemned in the general council of Constance." In the bull it is actually recited to be granted with the approbation of the council, (*sacro approbante concilio*); in the future editions, it is entitled the bull of Martyr V. approving the condemnation passed upon the errors of Wickliff and Hufs. by the council of Constance. Amongst

mongst the questions put for a test to suspected persons in this bull, are the following: " Whether he believes, that it is not lawful to swear in any case. — Whether he does not think, that all wilful perjury committed upon any occasion whatsoever, for the preservation of one's life, or another man's, or *even for the sake of faith*, is a mortal sin?" Here then this very council that is impeached of teaching, or at least countenancing breach of faith for the sake of religion, has made it expressly a term of catholic communion, that men must not perjure themselves for the sake of the faith. While the original accusers of the council of Constance, with a view of preserving their new power over their followers, to prepossess them with eternal enmity and an incurable jealousy of catholics, and to secure to themselves by doing so their daily bread, were torturing a principle out of a canon of that council, by which they made catholics allow of perjury and breach of faith for the sake of their church; the fathers of the council themselves, by a writing left to the perusal of all generations, in express terms, about whose meaning there is no doubt or mistake, exclude out of their church those who hold that very doctrine, and make it a mark of separation from popery. L'Enfant acknowledges, that the canon and the bull are inconsistent, that is, however, allowing the canon in the sense he explains it; but he ought in common honesty to have acknowledged that the bull, in the most satisfactory and explicit manner, removed all surmises and suspicions of an evil meaning in the canon, since doubtful expressions are always cleared up by a full explanation of the meaning of those who used them, and where two passages under the same authority seem inconsistent, the obscure ought always to be explained by that which is clear, express, and decisive, and not that which is clear and decisive by the obscure. Let me observe, moreover, that this bull, whose authenticity was never disputed, is a collateral testimony of the greatest weight, that the canon found by L'Enfant in the Vienna copy, but which is found in no authentic copy of the canons of that council, is spurious and contradictory to the sentiments of the fathers who composed the council. You will also observe from it,



it, that the sense of the fathers was exactly the same papists contend for at this day, and that they who now assert that papists are obliged to keep faith with heretics even where the interests of the church are concerned, speak no more than the express doctrine of that council. What a terrible and confounding evidence is this bull, against the misrepresenters of the council of Constance, and of the principles of papists! I will make no further animadversions upon the spirit of detraction and falsehood that suggested the charge, because it is infamous to human nature. As a man I must blush for it, while I am obliged to expose it, with a view if possible to save one party of mankind from the unjust malevolence and injuries of another. And here I solemnly protest, I would never enter on this disquisition, nor lay open a kind of guilt that humbles human nature so low, and is sufficient to give an honest man an aversion to his species, if the laws against papists in these nations did not deny them the liberty of entering into a proof of their innocence. The writers against the Freethinker in the Ledger, observed, that papists were delated to the magistrate as criminals and enemies to the British government; that is, there is no trial or proof made that they are enemies to the British government. Thus are they cut off from all other plea, but what divine truth and a free enquiry makes in their favour to the human heart; and an appeal from particular and passionate laws, to the generous spirit of the British constitution, and to the indispensable laws of eternal rectitude.



*An ENQUIRY whether the popish priests who are condemned to perpetual Imprisonment in England, and the papists who suffer by forfeitures, and by the other oppressive popish laws in Ireland. be punished for their mere mode of worship?*

**T**HE punishing of men for their mode of worship in a protestant state, carries with it a plain unavoidable self-condemnation; for as it implies, that men are justly punishable for dissenting from the established church,

church, it condemns the protestant cause in its origin, and declares it guilty of all the blood-shed, civil wars, desolations, and malevolence of party, that ensued upon the reformation. This consequence will be admitted by few protestants who think it necessary to defend the reformation; to avoid it, they generally agree in these nations, especially since Mr. Locke wrote his excellent treatise on toleration, that the plaguing of men for worshipping God in the manner they think most acceptable to him, is cruel and unjust. But shall they then li t up their hands to heaven, and at the same time acknowledge, *we are guilty of this crime, and we are resolved to be so?* To avoid the dilemma of condemning the reformation, or themselves, the prosecutors of popery in these islands, charge papists with doctrines inconsistent with the safety of protestant states, and to hide the appearance of persecution. pretend that papists are punished for those doctrines. In answer to which, I propose to prove, that papists are punished by the laws in these islands for their mode of worship only, and not on account of the doctrines pernicious to society, objected to them. I have committed my thoughts on this head to writing, to assist my memory, because I divide my proofs into different heads. It is something in their favour, that they are written in the tract of Mr. Locke on toleration, and that I have in several places closely copied his thoughts.

1. There are many cogent reasons for concluding that papists are not enemies to the form of our government. They are certainly the parents of this constitution, and struggled manfully for liberty, with powerful and heroic monarchs for ages. It is equally true, that the papists of France and Flanders, where the English priests are mostly educated, as heartily abjure the deposing power as the protestants of England; and all papists contend that faith is to be kept with heretics, which appears to be a principle of the papists of England and Ireland, by the highest testimony that can be given by men in this world of any principle. From all which I will here only infer, that there arises a high degree of probability, that his majesty's popish subjects, are not guilty

guilty of holding the dangerous principles objected to them.

2. In the execution of the laws against popery, there is no proof offered, or required, that the papist holds any tenets inconsistent with the safety of the constitution, or that are dangerous to the government. All the proof required against him is, that he is a papist or a popish priest. If in this case they be condemned for tenets dangerous to the government, they are condemned for crimes untried, unproved, where a high probability lies that they are not guilty, which is not only inconsistent with the government of laws, but is a flat contradiction to the British constitution, that allows no man to be condemned, or to suffer for a crime until the crime be proved, and evidence heard to it.

3. If words or laws have any meaning, a popish ecclesiastic is condemned for being a popish clergyman, a papist in England pays double taxes, or in Ireland forfeits his estate come to him by will, or by proximity of blood, and is subject to a variety of snares and evils, for being a papist; therefore he is expressly fined, plundered, or imprisoned, for his mode of worship paid to God, without the consideration of any other crime. For undoubtedly, that action which incurs the punishment, and without which a man is not punished, is the crime for which he suffers.

4. When a papist becomes a protestant, he may openly avow the deposing and king-killing doctrine with the late puritan writers, and boast of it; he may teach persecution as loudly as Calvin or Knox, and practice it with the methodists; he may set up a tub at Moorfields, and preach that no faith, pact, or friendship, should subsist between the saints and the idolatrous Canaanites, or the followers of antichrist, meaning by these obnoxious terms the papists and the members of the established church of England; notwithstanding, he shall be freed from the popery laws. All that it is necessary to render him innocent, is, that he abjure popery; which is a demonstration, that he is not persecuted for those tenets, but merely for his worship to God.

5. If

5. If he has defended the king and the British constitution, at the hazard of his life, against popish powers, and even against the pope and pretender, and at home, suffered penalties and forfeitures in consequence of his sincerity to a protestant government, yet, if he goes to mass, and worships God in the popish manner, he is liable to the laws against popery.

6. It is repugnant to our ideas of justice, destructive to the bonds of society, and subversive of the government of laws, to suppose papists are punished in these nations for dangerous tenets. The legislature has carefully provided express punishments for those who are guilty of rebellion, of sedition, or even of unlawful riots; but you will say it is the business of the magistrate, not only to punish such offences, but those men who inculcate them by precept. I grant it, but the papists publicly deny those doctrines, and condemn them as wicked. By what right or justice then are catholics punished for principles which they do not practice, and which they do not profess? And if magistrates may punish them in this manner, of what use is the government of laws, or what security can society yield, seeing that every man upon earth, how innocent soever, may by this precedent be punished for a crime, or a principle he does not practice, and does not abet? I do not here complain of want of liberty, although it be the birth-right of every British subject, who has not forfeited it by his proper actions; but of an open breach of the inalienable rights of society. Papists, says a writer in the Ledger, are delated to the magistrate as criminals. For what? Because they are enemies to the constitution. That would be unnatural indeed in English papists, who are undeniably the parents and primitive guardians of this happy constitution. But what has the papist done against it, or are there no laws provided against rebels or disturbers of the peace? He has actually done nothing against the government, but he holds dangerous tenets. Has it been legally proved upon him that he professed and taught those dangerous tenets? It is impossible to make such a proof, because he professes no such principles, but on the contrary asserts he does not believe them. Is it not evident then, that those tenets are the  
tenets



tenets of his accusers, and that if he be punished for them, he is absolutely denied the common rights and security of society, which in turn may be denied in the same manner to any other religious party, altho' they be guilty of no crime, but their private religious worship? therefore it would be subversive of justice, of society, and the government of laws, as well as of common sense, to suppose the papists in these islands are by the statutes made against them, punished for dangerous tenets.

From these propositions it is clear, that papists suffer not in these realms for any other crime, than that of paying to the divinity that worship which they think most acceptable to him; whether such punishment be persecution or no, I must leave to the decision of people better versed in definitions than I am. It is equally obvious, that these laws were not made for the sake of truth, or the salvation of papists. First, because penal or aggrrieving laws are not calculated to convict men, but to worry them out of truth and sincerity: Secondly, because people who are plagued or teased out of the religion of their conscience, are very criminal, altho' they quit the worse, and make an external profession of the better religion: Thirdly, because the men who make, or who enforce those laws, take no pains to convert pagans or mahometans, who cover the greater part of the earth by far, and whose religions have as little safety as popery: Fourthly, because they punish not the profligates and deists who in general profess themselves protestants, who are as much enemies to christianity as a sincere pious papist, and ought to be their first care: Fifthly, because they are negligent of converting papists by the most effectual means, a correct christian life, and shewing them the influence of pure christianity on their own practice. And lastly, because by opposing the magistrate to popery, and appealing to the conviction of punishment, they demonstrate, that they lay no great stress on the truth of their cause. When you put those two conclusions together; first, that papists are really punished for their mode of worship; and secondly, that they are not punished for the sake of truth, or the good of their salvation, you will be

be puzzled to find an adequate cause for this obscure malevolence; you will be yet further perplexed, when you observe, that the popery laws are a direct contradiction to the puritan principles of subjection and government. We will take it for granted, that when the people entered into society, they transferred to the government the powers it holds, with a view to enjoy their own possessions and lives in security and ease. But it cannot be supposed, that they transferred to their governors, a power to disturb them in their opinions and worship, or to influence their perceptions, their belief, assent, or conviction. Therefore, every government who acknowledges to have received its power from the people, and who attempts to punish, to fine, or imprison the subject for mere matters of faith, to speak in Waller's phrase, seeths the lamb in the mother's milk; that is, makes use of the authority the people gave them, which was intended for the people's security and ease, to rob them of security and property.

This argument falls particularly heavy on the protestants of a neighbouring kingdom, who rave of liberty, and the original contract, at the same time that their persecuting spirit has turned that fertile country into an unpeopled waste, and filled all the nations in Europe with its inhabitants. A modest man finds a difficulty in speaking of the religious oppression in that nation; for will any one who has not seen the face of the country, believe that Tartary, the dreary region of the Samoides, and the untilled Savannahs of America, only upon the earth resemble it; and that it is distinguished from all the nations in Europe, by the marks of desolating religious malevolence; yet the fact is strictly so\*. It is true,

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\* In reply to this assertion, it is said, men in the kingdom I speak of, lay waste their land for the general sake of interest, and that protestants as well as papists pasture their grounds; true, but this explication does not invalidate the charge, but remove it out of present view; the thinness of inhabitants at present renders improvement and agriculture to a considerable extent impossible, and must make

true, the papists are not hanged or burned for their religion in that kingdom: they are only buffeted down to wretchedness and poverty, by a system of laws ingeniously fitted to chase them into misery, and then to tempt them by avarice out of their sincerity. Pride, disobedience to parents, and almost every vice of human nature, are

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make it eligible, and indeed absolutely necessary to all denominations to pasture their grounds. I do not mean that even the labouring hands in that kingdom are employed, or that wages are high, but that for want of a large steady consumption, which a multitude of inhabitants would make, a little plenty in the article of corn so overstocks the market, that agriculture is a dangerous employment. In fact, they have not consumers at home for an extensive agriculture, and if they had a market opened to them in other countries, they have not hands to till the ground. Both of which are the obvious effects of the religious oppression in that nation, as it must appear to any man who has travelled through France, Spain and Germany, where he meets with multitudes of the natives of that kingdom scattered by the fury of the popery-laws. It is altogether amazing to think that Great Britain looks on carelessly, while her subjects are worried into exile, who, if we suppose them useless at home in every other light, would forever form a balance of power, and secure the established church, and the dependance of that important part of the British empire. It is no less matter of curiosity, why the presbyterian party of I——d, against their own principle of liberty, and in direct opposition to every view of interest, have entered into an obstinate and unanimous scheme of severity, which they are conscious must drive great numbers of papists out of that kingdom. If the bill brought into the house the last session of parliament there, by a member, who is very remarkable for his indignant sense of the dependance of I——d, had passed into a law, it is certain that the bulk of the popish tradesmen and artificers would be obliged to seek for bread among the most dangerous enemies to our trade, and leave that kingdom almost an empty theatre for the presbyterians.

are employed there to prevent the growth of popery, and to defend the protestant cause. It is hardly credible, that a people exists so insensible to the sentiments of natural virtue and justice, which all mankind feel, as to strip an orphan of his paternal inheritance, because his father was an honest man, and obeyed the dictates of his conscience, or can a stranger to the men who enacted these laws, imagine, that they make a great rout about liberty, and censure loudly popish persecution. Dean Swift says somewhere, that a Tory in I---l---d would make a good Whig in England. But, notwithstanding the passionate things I---sh protestants speak of the original contract and the pangs they feel for the liberties of the people, the popery laws there make a full discovery of their hypocrisy, and demonstrate that they are not really friends to liberty; that in truth all they aim at is such an independence as will convey into their hands the liberty of tyrannizing, and that the doctrine of the original contract is not defended by them with a view to generous freedom, but only as a protest in favour of future enterprizes. You easily comprehend that it is not the doctrine I censure; but the hypocrisy. The natural equality of man, whether it ever existed on earth or no, is an idea that stamps the hearts of the millions of mankind with dignity. What I find fault with is the prostitution of this noble idea by a set of men who have entered into the most ingenious system of spiteful tyranny that ever plagued the human race. An inquisition would at once mercifully chase the papists out of the kingdom, and pity would open them an asylum in the neighbouring nations. But at present, they are suffered to walk about and deliberately sated by a variety of laws to misery and insult.



*An ENQUIRY why has not the popular hatred of protestants to papists in the British islands subsided, as in Holland and Germany?*

MR. PRESIDENT,

**I**F the enquiry were, why the spirit of violence against catholics ceased in Holland and the protestant states of Germany, I would answer without hesitation, because the reformed preachers required legal settlements, their power and office are determined, their flocks are of the religion of the government, these preachers do not fear catholics, neither have they any thing further to hope for, therefore they suffer the tempers and passions of their followers to settle: but the question is, why the calm that succeeded in Germany and Holland to the first transports of hostility and zeal against catholics, has not extended to the british islands, and why papists who there enjoy the rights of society, are singled out here to the hatred of the crowd, and to the prosecution of laws, however upright and peaceable their demeanor be. To answer this question, I must trace the original springs of the popular animosity to catholics in England, and enquire into the reasons for keeping it alive to this day.

The popular hatred to roman catholics in England, did not arise from the clergy, as in other reformed nations: for the natural temper of the church of England, is a mild unpersecuting charity, the popular odium here arose from the court. I will give you its history from its origin to its present state in a few words. King Henry VIII and his tool Cromwell found it necessary to render the popish clergy objects of public disesteem and hatred, in order to palliate the seizure of the monastery lands, which endowed so many houses thro' the nation, wherein the poor in their distresses found relief. Every one who is acquainted with the transactions of that reign, knows something of the impostures and artifices made use of by that subtle minister, to smother his passage, to the invasion of the possessions of the church. The aversion raised upon that occasion to the religious, was afterwards easily transferred to the religion

on itself in Edward's and Elizabeth's reign. Queen Elizabeth had her separate reasons for oppressing popery: she judged it to be unfriendly to her peculiar interests. There were, it is certain, some plots carried on by papists against her; but then observe the mighty change in the established national worship, she ventured to bring about publicly in the face of a catholic kingdom, and the solidity and ease with which she effected her design. If you compare the whole to the occurrences that happened in the reigns of king Charles the first, and of his two sons Charles and James the second, you will immediately be sensible of the prevalence of the popish principle of obedience to the constitution. The weakly and thin efforts to resist her, will demonstrate to you the general loyalty of catholics to princes they believe to be heretics; and the cause of your wonder will be, how religious principle was able to bridle the resentments, and counteract the self-interest of the bulk and strength of the nation; and that so few yielded to their passions and provocations, for catholics feel injuries just like protestants, and would act as they do under grievances, if their principles had not intervened. When protestant historians review the events brought about by her ministry, they are amazed at their success, because they have not an idea of the principles of the subjects she had to deal with, and do not lay sufficient stress on the loyalty of catholics; for altho' her ministry were politic, they were not able to cope with the nation, if the nation did not yield them security. In fact, the electors and princes of Germany, who became protestants, established the reformation in their dominions as prosperously as she did. The attempt she made to introduce the reformation, and her manner of carrying that design into execution, amount to a demonstration that she was well apprised the catholic principle of loyalty would bear a great deal. If you desire to know the true reason of the penal statutes in her reign, Camden her historian informs us, that they were 1. The opinion of the queen's illegitimacy abroad; 2. jealousies had of the queen of Scots, her nearness to the crown; 3. the bull of pope Pius the 5th; 4. her doubts of the house of Guise in behalf of their niece; and 5. her quarrel with Spain.



kingdom. I could shew many effects of this debased spirit in the house of lords, in the last years of king Henry's reign, and thro' king Edward's, but I will single out a remarkable instance in queen Elizabeth's days.

That princess was desirous to have queen Mary of Scotland executed, but she was also desirous to have that deed extorted from her, and to lie in public at other peoples doors. This was understood in both houses of parliament, in consequence of which, each of them solicited the victim's death, particularly the lords, as a writer I happened to read lately says, distinguished themselves by an address against the queen of Scots, worded in a very ridiculous cant, setting forth the judgment of God on Saul for sparing the life of Agag, and of Ahab for Benhaded. This odd petition, much fitter for fanatic tub-preachers than for cavaliers and men of honour, in which the scriptures were perverted to destroy an innocent woman, must give a strange idea of the nobility of this time.

In her reign there were no more monastery lands, nor pious foundations to be shared. The churches were stripped, to their present decent simplicity, of their superstitious plate and ornaments; and the very livings that were transferred to protestant-clergymen, were, by private compact, divided between the new prelates and the courtiers, who, whilst the church had a good manor or silver candlestick to lose, had the reformation mightily at heart. Altho' the spoil was great, it was not endless. There were new mouths gaping, and the thirst of ravage that was now grown into habit, had not matter in the church to allay it. But there were still several catholic lords and gentlemen who had considerable possessions. The fury of this ravening appetite that had been raised, was therefore turned into an obstinate endeavour to drive the catholics of property into rebellion, or to find them guilty of it. And for this worthy end, no people upon earth had the talents of the queen's ministry. Letters were counterfeited as if written by the queen of Scots, and dropped in the houses of roman catholics, while emissaries and spies were posted every where to catch up discourse, and misrepresent conversation, informers were encouraged in improbable stories, and



and the minds of the populace were by a thousand terrifying legends and rueful tales prepared to find the papists guilty of any thing laid to their charge. This treacherous ministry, while they effected their mistress's designs and their own, were a disgrace to mankind. The same spirit that distinguished them at home, directed their policy abroad. They distressed the nations around with whom they were at peace, by fomenting conspiracies and insurrections, and encouraging, by every dark and silent art, the rebellion of subjects against their lawful sovereigns. All this may be called policy, but sure I am, that every honest man will call it diabolic policy. Never perhaps was there such an opposition as appeared through three successive reigns, between the loyalty of catholics on the one hand, and the unwearied machinations, plots, menaces, and injuries, of an avaricious, abandoned set of men on the other, who struggled with infinite obstinacy to drive the catholics into rebellion, or to find a colour for charging them. This spirit was still so fresh in king James the 1st's reign, that the harpies of that time were greatly offended with the king, for defending his popish subjects from universal destruction, for the gunpowder plot, against whom no proof or circumstance of guilt whatsoever lay. For as all who were found guilty upon the severest scrutiny, were proceeded against capitally, it is evident, that the party who pressed to involve all the papists in England in the punishment, meant to deny them the protection of the laws, and common equity. This remarkable instance serves to prove, that the enemies of popery judge that papists are intitled to no justice. Rapin, the hugo-not writer of the English history, condemns king James for interposing in behalf of his innocent subjects, and shewed the French nation what the catholics there had to expect, if the calvinists arrived at the power they had in view in that kingdom.

It was in queen Elizabeth's reign, when the last sparks of virtue and honour seemed extinguished, and humble court was paid to the most depraved of mankind, that it became criminal and a mark of disaffection, to do justice to the virtues or tenets of catholics in writing or conversation; and that there was not a scarcity

of corn, or cattle, an house burned, or a secret murder committed in the nation, that was not attributed to the papists. In short it became the mode to charge them with every public calamity, whose origin lay concealed from the vulgar, and with every evil design that animosity could suggest; and to this mode, most of the English historians conform to this day. What I had occasion to remark of this celebrated queen and her ministry may startle those who are not accustomed to distinguish the right and virtuous from the fortunate. The partial pictures drawn of herself, and of her courtiers, which were designed and sketched out, by men who sat down in order to write an apology for certain actions, which they thought it necessary should wear a good and honest appearance, have contributed to the confused judgment men make of this reign. *Mallet* the writer of the lord Chancellor Bacon's life, while he has those party ideas in view, presents you the side of this queen's character to which her success was owing; but even there, he is cautiously superficial, and does not enter into the passions and motives that suggested to her the course she steered. In the same cautious manner, he attempts to place the characters of her ministers out of the reach of reproach; but when the necessity of white-washing this remarkable reign slips out of his mind, and in the course of his work he comes to give some account of the means employed to bring the gallant and generous earl of Essex to the block, he then freely discovers the dark and sure arts of vengeance this ministry were remarkable for, against which unsuspecting virtue and openness of temper were no guard. It would probably be difficult in any other school but her court, to give the noble philosopher, whose life *Mallet* wrote, the abandoned obsequiousness to vice that appears, thro' his character, at variance with his sense and judgment. It would better serve the design of the panegyrists of this famous queen, and of her courtiers, who wish to make them pass for good, amiable or benevolent characters, instead of dwelling on their refined policy, their arts of deception, and spreading to view the lustre of their success, to shew from facts, that they had some reluctance at committing the most shocking crimes, that they ever  
scrupled

scrupled to deceive or betray, or relented to shed blood, when their jealousy, revenge, or interests required it.

In the reign of succeeding kings, the bulk of the popish lords and gentlemen dropped into the established religion, and the power of popery was annihilated: accordingly, the anger and hatred of protestants would proportionably abate here, as in other kingdoms and states where popery was abolished, if it had not happened about the latter end of queen Elizabeth's reign, and under James the first, that a sect of dissenters from the national church started up into immense power, who never lost views of founding their religious tyranny on the ruins of the national church and constitution, without being able to accomplish their design. You know I mean the puritans, and the neighbouring sects who occasionally unite with them against the church of England. The only practicable method they had, was to accuse the established church, of popery, and for this end, it was a necessary and fundamental principle to keep up the clamour against popery, and *piously bequeath it to their children*; and indeed this was their invariable plan of attacking all that resisted their yoke. When king James the first, before he came to the throne of England, attempted to abridge the power of the presbyterians in Scotland, they assured the nation in their public declarations, with vast confidence, that he was inclined to popery; and when queen Elizabeth repressed them in England, one Stubbs, a puritan lawyer, wrote the *gaping gulph*, in which he accused her to the people of an intention to introduce popery, with such a visible tendency of alienating her subjects, that the lords of the privy-council wrote to archbishop Grindal about it; and to stop the peoples apprehensions, several popish ecclesiastics were tried, condemned, and hanged. Whatever the puritans said of the papists, as the popish power was then no more in England, and the church of England was the real obstacle in their way, and the true object of their clamour, it is curious to observe the exaggeration and laboured virulence with which they impeached it in that queen's reign. "It maintains (said they) the merchandize of shameless Babylon. The government now used by archbishops and bishops, is

" both antichristian and devilish. Rome is come home  
 " to our gates. Antichrist reigneth amongst us. The  
 " established government of the church is traitorous  
 " against the majesty of Jesus Christ; it confirmeth  
 " the pope's supremacy; it is accursed." Bancroft,  
 the Polybius of England, whose quotation from their  
 writings, I have repeated, saw perfectly through their  
 designs, and wrote his dangerous positions many years  
 before the church and state were ruined by this obnoxious  
 impeachment. In proportion as the puritans redoubled  
 their efforts against the church, they always raised  
 higher and higher the clangor against popery; for very  
 unfortunately for the papists of England, at the reformation,  
 the church that was then established, retained the order of  
 bishops, the cross in baptism, some of the ornaments worn  
 by popish ecclesiastics, and a few other exteriors that strike  
 the eye of the populace, and give a colour to the charge.  
 While the destruction of the church was in agitation in  
 king Charles the first's time, the outcry against popery  
 was the trumpet-march of every conventicle, and has always  
 been the most infallible sign of the pressing efforts of the  
 puritans and the allied sects against the national church,  
 and against the government. The true friends of the church  
 and constitution always saw the fraudulent design, and  
 detected it. " Popery was still made the word of alarm  
 " (says bishop Sprat) to excite and exasperate the po-  
 " pulace; though it was manifest that the authors of  
 " all these clamours against popery, never intended its  
 " suppression, but that their design was, by the popu-  
 " lar dread of it, to shake the crown, and undermine  
 " the church of England." It is very observable, in  
 looking over the history of England, that there was no  
 warm outcry to prosecute the papists from queen Eliza-  
 beth's days down to the present time, that an attempt  
 against the established church or constitution did not  
 immediately follow it. The success of the fanatics  
 when they pulled down both, under pretence of op-  
 posing popery, inspired the famous lord Shaftsbury to  
 attempt the same game over again, in order once more  
 to ruin the church and government. And this accom-  
 plished



plished master of political legerdemain, raised so many phantoms of popish plots, massacres, and firing of cities, and made such dreadful impressions on the good people of England, that they were on the point of issuing forth, and sacrificing all the papists in the kingdom to their fears. Nothing can put the prejudice of his days in a clearer light, than the conduct of the courts of justice; from whose verdicts it is manifest, as I observed before, that they judged flat contradictions might be true against papists. Oates swore and forswore himself openly in the face of the courts, yet since the testimony served to hang papists, it passed like demonstration with judges and juries.

The puritan race in the British dominions are now gradually melting down into methodism, whose children, although at present in the wilderness, are heirs of the covenant, and of the promised land, with all the vigour of youthful enthusiasm; for as the real tendency of enthusiasm in a sect of Christians who do not, like the quakers, wholly disclaim the use of the sword, must appear in repeated acts; and the secret object of their transports be revealed by time, every one of those passionate sects loses its credit, and consequently its power and confidence in old age. Hence it is necessary to fanaticism to put on a new appearance to recover its expiring force and fire. It is remarkable that, in proportion as power and numbers are going over to methodism, so are the puritan hopes, and the clamour against popery, which may one day be of use to establish the kingdom of righteousness. Here then is the reason why the odium against popery has not subsided in England, as in Holland and Germany. The popular hatred in England against papists, is connected with the competition between the sectaries and the church established, and is perpetually renewed like a dormant title, lest it grow out of date, and a pretence be wanting to overthrow the national church, when their power and numbers shall suggest to the saints once more, that they have found favour in the sight of the Lord to execute their long-hoped-for plan, and to lay their yoke on the necks of princes. What I have said accounts for the untamed ferocity of Scotch presbyterians to papists. The

calvinist ministers in Scotland are established by law, yet their acrimony and clamour against papists continue, because of their constant opposition to the episcopal church, and their fears of it, which make it necessary to keep up the animosity of the crowd to popery, in order to play it off against the church of England, and bar out an enemy that still appears formidable.

I am aware that it will be objected to me, that I attempt to disunite protestants, and the party whose spirit I have traced will thence conclude, in the usual puritan cant, that I am a papist. I own freely, that what I say must tend to disunite protestants; and so it will, if I tell a man at church who is intent on the service, that his next neighbour on the same seat is picking his pocket; or inform an honest London merchant, who is just getting away out of Hounslow, and entering upon the Heath, that he is in company of an highwayman, who a few minutes before charged and primed his pistols. The question which is to determine the truth of what I say, is not whether it tends to put the church established on its guard against enthusiasts, which can be attended with no ill consequences, but whether those enthusiasts be actually undermining the foundation of the church established amongst the populace and industriously taking the most effectual steps to build on its ruins an odious system of priestly tyranny: Whether the methodist ministers be indefatigable to sever the laity from their legal pastors, and to bring the national clergy into disrepute and contempt with their flocks: Whether they warmly charge them with popish ceremonies, and popish worship, and set themselves up to the nation as the champions against popery? Whether, in short, they are busy putting the same leading strings on the crowd, and training them exactly in the steps the Oliverian fanatics set out with? If this be literally the case, then it is an undoubted truth, that they are for years past at hard work, undermining the church of England and the constitution.

As to the charge, that I am a papist, I am perfectly indifferent about it, while my words carry the plain, simple marks of truth, and I speak in behalf of the human kind, against religious persecution and tyranny.

These

These are the principles I set out with, and they are principles I shall religiously adhere to while I am able to speak or hold a pen in my hand. However, I cannot but observe once more, that it made no inconsiderable article in the great scheme of the puritans, to single out every man who opposed them, or who kept a strict eye on their proceedings, as a papist to the populace. They circulated this impudent lie so often from their pulpits of King Charles I. that at his execution he thought it necessary to call witnesses that he lived and died a protestant. In my thoughts of the modern methodists I am far from being singular. "Whoever reads," says Dr. Warburton, in his doctrine of grace, "the large accounts of the spiritual states of the regicides, will be fully satisfied they are both of the same stock, and are ready on a return of the like season to produce the same fruits. All the difference which distance of times and variety of customs have affected being only this: the methodist is now an apostolic independent, and the independent was then a mahometan methodist."

When a person speaks of disuniting protestants, and has in view the sectaries and church of England, he brings to mind some idea of an union, and plainly insinuates that a friendship sometimes subsisted between them. For my part, I have been often puzzled, as others have been before me, to discover in what point this union consists. The Socinians, who deny the supreme divinity of our Saviour, the Antitrinitarians, the Deists, and the fifth-monarchy-men, who issued into the streets in London to murder every man who did not join them to erect the kingdom of Christ, all have the assurance to call themselves protestants, and pretend to have a strict right to that badge of union. The Jews and Moors, who were banished from Spain, protested with great sincerity against popery; so would the antient druids our predecessors, and the Telapoins of India, if they were in the same situation. There is a closer tie, and a dearer name, common to the sectaries and the established church, it is the name of christians; but as the papists are christians, that is a suspicious denomination, and it seems must no longer be

acknowledged as the bond of union, or the pledge of charity.

I have been equally astray about the time when this union subsisted ; it was not when the sectaries, with unparalleled rancour, persecuted to death the first prelate of the established church, unfortunate *Laud*, for defending it like a true pastor, and were satisfied with nothing less than his blood ; although no law could be strained to take away his life ; it was not when they, after treacherously set on the mob to bait its bishops, and finally destroyed it by force of arms ; it is not now in being in America, or Scotland, where the puritan race will not tolerate episcopacy ; because, to speak in their own words, they will not suffer iniquity to be established by law. Now, methinks it would be very proper, when the union of the sectaries and the church established is spoken of, that it should be shewn when, or where, or how this union ever subsisted as a band of love and concord, or at what period of time the sectaries ceased to undermine the church of England, or were willing to tolerate it, where they had power to persecute.

In the course of what I have said, Mr. President, I have traced the popular odium against catholics in these nations, from men who plundered the churches, the benefices and the convents, and who naturally sought for pretences to justify their rapine, from an interested vicious ministry, and from a jealous arbitrary queen. The laws that oppress catholics, were undoubtedly at their origin the growth of an age when English liberty durst hardly breathe its honest wishes, and accordingly they discover, at the first glance, the legible marks of despotism, and a contempt for the rights of subjects. Both the odium and the oppressive laws are, for some ages past, supported and extended by the treacherous designs and machinations of a party, who have forever in view the destruction of the established church and state, and who hope for success, from keeping up the popular enmity to papists, that they may have it ready at hand, to bring the church of England and its ministers under the hatred and indignation of the crowd,  
when



when a convenient season offers to erect, once more, the standard of the saints, and wage war with Antichrist.



*A Supplement to DISCOURSE I, II, and IV, of the first part of the Free Examination.*

**I**N discourse the second, third, and fourth, it is contended for by arguments that have not been yet answered, that papists do not persecute by a principle of their religion. To what the gentlemen who made these discourses said, I have something further to add, which I will here lay before my reader.

When Augustin the monk converted England, Ethelbert the first Christian king, as Bede our countryman testifies, never persecuted any pagan subject, but gave every one the freedom of his conscience, *Hist. Gent. Ang. p. 163*. A reader can hardly avoid making a comparison between the spirit of popery then, and of the infant reformation in queen Elizabeth's reign, when the popish priest was hanged for his mode of worship; and the layman of his church for giving him entertainment and shelter. It is further to be observed, that Bede records the liberty of conscience allowed by the first English catholics, as the approved sense of his church, in his own times.

If we come forward to the rise of the reformation, we find the protestants of France for many years, I might say for ages, as the age of man may be accounted, in the full enjoyment of the privileges of subjects, and liberty of worship: They had their public churches, and were permitted, equally with catholics, to civil and military employments. "In a word," says Dr. Heylin, "they lived so secure and happy, that they wanted nothing to perpetuate their felicities to succeeding Ages; but moderation in themselves, Gratitude to God, and good Affection towards their king." Heyl. *Hist. Presb. l. 12, p. 430*.

The protestants of Bohemia, and disciples of Huss, being reduced by the government, and their own divisions

sions, took refuge in Poland, after many a well-fought field against their sovereign. Sigismund Augustus, king of Poland received them kindly, and was the pattern of toleration. From his death, which happened in 1572, until the year 1733, they enjoyed all the privileges of subjects and citizens; that is, for more than 160 years. When a king educated in the protestant religion was elected in Poland, then the catholics, who formed the bulk of the kingdom, put conditions upon their sovereign at the diet of confirmation, to restrain him from bestowing benefices or employments on Lutherans, to whom they supposed he had still a secret partiality. This king afterwards was disgusted with his reformed polish subjects, in his wars with Charles king of Sweden, and Stanislaus. I shall not determine whether he had just reason of suspecting their fidelity, or that they favoured the protestant king of Sweden: be that as it will, they found not the same indulgence after. All I desire to shew is, that for about two centuries, the protestants of Poland continued in the full enjoyment of every privilege of the republic civil and religious, as Mr. Pye witnesses in his fifth letter, p. 96. Let me produce another evidence of popish toleration in France and Poland. who, from his knowledge, the time he lived, and his religion, is unexceptionable. It is Milton, who in his work of *true religion, heresy and schism*, says, "If the French and the Polonian protestants enjoy amongst papists the liberty of arguing, preaching in their several assemblies, public writing, and the freedom of printing, much more may a protestant expect it among protestants." p. 8.

The reformed in the Austrian dominions, at this day are in the settled peaceable possession of the privileges of subjects, and of the liberty of their religion. In the late wars they demonstrated their loyalty and fidelity to their sovereign, and accordingly, their sovereign has taken them into the protection of subjects. The spirit of rebellion and of persecution, as they ought to do always, ceased together.

These are evidences invincibly strong and clear, that popery is not an intolerant religion. The French and Poles were papists, and in strict communion with the

the see of Rome, while they tolerated protestants, they acknowledged the pope's spiritual primacy, and held firmly every necessary principle of popery. The Austrians, and other catholic powers of Germany who indulge their protestant subjects with liberty of conscience at this day, are also papists, and hold every principle of popery. The strictest adherence to popery does not therefore require intoleration, and this is the conclusion a clear writer would have made in Mr. Pye's place, when he tells us of the indulgence and long protection the protestants received in Poland, whose government all that time acknowledged the pope's spiritual jurisdiction and supremacy.

If Mr. Pye does not allow of this inference, the choice he has left is, to prove that the French and Poles of the last centuries were not papists, and that the present Austrians have left the popish church. I am curious to see how he will get himself out of this dilemma, into which he was hurried in the eagerness of his passion against his countrymen the catholics of England.



*An ENQUIRY into the probable means of engaging popish governments to tolerate their protestant subjects.*

A Challenge made by Mr. Pye, which has been often made before, seems to place the prosecution of papists, in these nations, to revenge, or to the laws of retaliation. "If (says he) a reflection, &c. should induce the princes of the roman catholic church to throw open a humane and well-regulated toleration to every sect of christians, and to admit protestants in France and Spain under no severer restrictions than what the roman catholics lie under at present in England; then possibly might the first protestant sovereign in Europe be disposed to improve on this example, and to enlarge the bounds of christian liberty in his kingdoms," p. 101, 102.

There is but one effectual method to allay the persecutions, in France and Spain, and that lies in the hands of protestants themselves. It is only to give the same security

security to government, which the catholics offer in England, to renounce cordially the principle of resistance, of levying war against the state, and of inviting foreign enemies into its bowels to weaken and destroy it. If they do this, and demean themselves peaceably, they may expect the same indulgence protestants enjoy in the Austrian dominions, and in several other popish territories in Germany, and be, at least, perfectly secure that they have no more to fear from the principles of religion in the one place than in the other. I neither pretend to censure the spirit of resistance and civil-war, nor do I defend the despotism of monarchs to which the calvinists have shewn such an aversion. I only assert, that whilst power is the darling passion of man, and sovereigns affect absolute dominion, it is in vain for their active and inveterate enemies to expect countenance or protection from them. What hopes can the Hugonots entertain of being recalled to France, who in their memoirs of the civil-wars of that nation, ardently extol the noble spirit of their ancestors, and defend their attempts against the government? The daily histories published to vindicate the great rebellion, to justify the murder of a king, and to fan the natural passion of liberty in this kingdom, and the enterprises of the dissidents of Poland at the other extremity of Europe, are but bad symptoms to the court of France, that the spirit of resistance and revolt are yet worn out among the reformed.

Nothing opens mens eyes more effectually to their prejudices, than to make other peoples cases their own. The dissidents had not by any treaty so good a right to a toleration in Poland, as the catholics in England had here, when their oppressions began under queen Elizabeth. English papists were not refugees from Germany, who got shelter and an hospitable reception in this island. They were the possessors of authority, of legislation, and government. The laws did not allow them favours by courtesy, for theirs was the established and constitutional religion of the nation; and the queen, at her accession to the throne, swore to maintain it. Her contract was not a supposed one, made originally with  
 associating



associating savages, by a monarch whose memory is lost: it was sworn to by herself when she received the crown.

When the day of tribulation came on the English catholics, the ravishing of their churches and church livings from them was hardly mentioned amongst the severities they complained of. They would esteem themselves happy, if they were suffered to worship God unmolested in the fields under a tree, or in their own houses. It was enacted high-treason for a popish priest to remain in the kingdom, which gave occasion to an allusive observation in Mr. Addison's travels, that those who were honoured as martyrs in Italy, were called traitors, in England; and the popish laity were punished by laws for being present at their own church service. Then for the first time it was seen in the world, that men were prosecuted for a national worship, that had been the established religion of their native country for many centuries: because in all ages and nations before, where the rulers were converted to a new religion, they had respect for the prejudices the crowd of men naturally entertain in favour of the religion of their forefathers, that had a long and settled possession of their minds.

The drift of what I have said is to shew, in what unequal balances are the actions of those we love and hate weighed. In the reign of queen Elizabeth, or any subsequent reign, the English catholics did not by a public Confederation, made under arms, call in the French or Spaniards; their allegiance held them like chains of steel; yet are they counted disloyal and worthy of prosecution, by the very men who say that the conduct of the dissidents is just and necessary for their own defence. This vile partiality is what I want all along to detect, which is the indubitable evidence of a departure from all truth, honesty and rectitude of heart. I must observe, that the wickedness is always in proportion to the real quantity of intentional evil, and that the kingdom of England, however it might be embarrassed by an invasion of the French and Spaniards, yet, is not in such danger of thralldom from either, as Poland is from Russia; and that to call the Russians into Poland at this juncture

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is to give the last unpitying stroke to the independences of that republic. The recent behaviour of the dissidents cannot fail to recal to every reader's mind the invitation by which the Turks were led on to the siege of Vienna, and both the Germans and English into the bowels of France. I do not pretend to censure the conduct of the dissidents of Poland, nor of the Hugonots. What I would have my reader observe is, that whether their conduct be right or wrong, it naturally alarms states, and more especially despotic governments, and draws jealousy and persecution on protestants in France and Spain.

It is in vain for Mrs. Macaulay, on the puritan party, to oppose to what I say the rights men have to liberty, and to the means of liberty; and to declaim with spirit against passive obedience and non-resistance. I allow to all they say its full weight, and what I insist on is, that, in the present case, it all preponderates against themselves, unless by their eloquence they persuade despotic monarchs of the glory of waving their prerogatives, and setting nations free. For whilst governments affect absolute power, and hate controul, such declamations of the puritan party, whether just or no, will only serve to rouse and keep alive the jealousies of monarchs, and to stir them up to take measures against those republicans as their radical enemies, whom no time, no usage can conciliate to the interests of absolute government. Now the love of absolute authority, and the claims sovereigns and aristocracies make to the passive obedience of their subjects, are no more the offspring of popery, than the appetites of eating and sleeping. Despotism obtained in the world before popery had a beginning, and now in the most supine tranquility, rules the mahometans and heathens over the vast continent and islands of Asia. The persecution of protestants, therefore, evidently arose from the desire of uncontrollable power in governors and not from popery; nor can the popish church by any relaxation acquire toleration for them. If the pope were to issue a brief to morrow in favour of the calvinists, the kings of France and Spain, probably would pay little regard to it, until they were fully satisfied of their non-resistance. It is a truth as fixed as the foundation of the earth,

earth, that while human nature remains what it is, and governors are fond of uncontrollable power, calvinists must either fall under the indignation and jealousy of absolute states, or persuade their rulers that they have embraced the principles of passive obedience and non-resistance. But then for men wilfully to misplace this aversion which absolute sovereigns ever had, and ever will have to the patrons of resistance, and to attribute it to religious principle, in order to draw oppression on innocent men, is shocking malevolence and treachery. Now to speak to Mr. Pye's proposal, suppose no reflections of any kind, capable of removing the suspicions of the kings of France and Spain, or of inducing them to tolerate protestants, why should their obstinacy, cruelty, or folly, be avenged on the catholics of England and Ireland, who are not in the fault? there are nations in the east where a man's relations are involved in the punishment of his crimes, but as there is no affinity in the present case, the injustice Mr. Pye pleads for, is not countenanced by the most savage and unjust laws upon earth. If my neighbour does wrong, and be a wicked man, does his example give me an authority to be guilty of the crime I condemn in him, and to hurt people who have not offended me.

Let me once more speak of the means of restoring universal toleration and mutual confidence to christians, for it is worth all our attention. It is, *that all parties abjure heartily the tenet of a right to resist the civil government for the sake of religion.* For it is evident to a reflecting man, that abettors of this tenet, must war for ever on every government of a different religion, unless they disguise their designs a while, and make an occasional cessation, and that they must be persecuted from time to time according as they make their efforts, until in the end they be annihilated, or the government and its religion destroyed. This hostile principle which seems radical in all sects of fanatics, except the quakers, they take infinite pains to disguise, until it has accomplished its ends; and this is much the case of the calumnies with which they always begin the attack on the governments they meditate to subdue.

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I will finish this discourse with some reflections upon the foregoing tracts, and on the Freethinker's letters, which brought on the subject. If we should suppose the popish religion able to defend itself by equal force of reasoning, and equal evidence of scripture, with the reformation; and that its priests were equal to the reformed clergy in language, eloquence and learning, yet we shall be obliged to admit, that it must inevitably be destroyed, although gradually, in Great Britain and Ireland; because, where all other advantages are equal, the motives of this world must turn the balance in a course of time. The ambition of titles and honours, the views of being elected members of parliament, of getting commissions and places in the army, the navy, the law, the church, and revenue, will necessarily have their influence; these motives cordially engage that part of the croud who follow fortune, and must make inroads on popery without ceasing. But what ought to be the effect, when reason and the evidence of scripture, along with the superior eloquence and learning of the reformed clergy, are united with the advantages of the world? I know it has been said, by people who affect to say something on this head, that popery hath also its temporal advantages in these nations, that popish gentlemen and noblemen make distributions of money amongst the poor who frequent their mass-houses. But it is much to be questioned, if popish noblemen and gentlemen are more charitable than protestants of the same rank, or more inclined to give their substance in common to those of their own communion. And if they be, a difficulty little different from the last occurs, why popery should have such mighty influence over the human mind, as to make men, for religion-sake, give away from their families the goods of this world, for which their reformed neighbours have such a passion. What latent power in popery thus universally subdues the love of the world in the soul?

If without reason, we suppose catholic noblemen and gentlemen, to be in so extraordinary a manner disinterested to this world, and devoted to religion, we must also conceive that their donations can only bribe the poor; but, then, what bewitching persuasive shall we find,



find to preserve the noblemen and gentlemen themselves in the pale of popery, who have none of the bribes of this world to expect from their religion, but on the contrary, the loss of their substance, and who see on the side of the reformation, honours and titles for themselves, and a provision for younger children from so many different departments? With regard to them, we find ourselves in the difficulty I mentioned. We are obliged to conclude, that through motives of interest they must drop gradually into the church established, even allowing that popery is able to support itself with equal force of reason, equal testimony of scripture, and with the same eloquence and learning of its clergy. And then of course follows this consideration, that when the noblemen and gentlemen are become protestants, and no longer give the pretended donations to popish proselites, then, as that spring ceases, popery must pass away equally amongst the common people. Thus the difficulty still remains in full force, and popery amongst all degrees of men must fall gradually, if opposed only with equal force of reason and evidence of scripture.

This difficulty is however clearly and fully solved in the Freethinker's letter, and the discourses that follow. That day protestants took reason and the gospel for their guides, and founded their religious tenets on the natural right every man has to judge and believe for himself, if an evil demon were suffered to tempt them to wave their advantages, and to strengthen popery to counter-act the mighty powers of the reformation, he could not seduce them to take any step so proper for that purpose, as to prosecute men for paying to God in sincerity of heart the worship they think most acceptable to him, and at the same time, to attack popery, and defend the religion of the gospel, by notorious falsehoods and slanders, which every catholic knew to be so, and every protestant of penetration might easily detect. If human weakness, anger, or revenge, betrayed the first reformers to take up those illiberal methods of attack, yet there can be no excuse for continuing them, after the first ferment cooled, and people returned to their sober senses; nor can those methods  
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serve any end, but a fixed determination to give every reflecting honest protestant, a violent suspicion of the secret drift or spirit of the reformation, an ill opinion of its defenders, and some favourable sentiments of popery, which is thus treacherously assassinated; because, it is the known method of falsehood to defend itself by dishonest means, and every man feels that truth is never more invincible or beautiful, than when it appears in simplicity. Will not a reflecting man, who sees every age of the reformation, against principle, against christianity, and the plainest dictates of honesty, takes up the same misrepresentations to oppose popery, conclude, that necessity, and the nature of things, first and last, suggested this method to them; and that they quitted the path of truth, because truth did not answer their purposes? Does not a christian feel in a moment, without the least reflection, that it is as great an absurdity and contradiction, to defend the gospel of christ by falsehood, as to expect the father of lies should preach it? What hopes of credit can a party have, who prosecute men for their religious worship, in contempt of their own principles, and who place their confidence in obloquy and slander? Will not a sober thinking protestant see, that a mistake in following convicted prevaricators is no longer innocent, or defensible, since he has reason to suspect their veracity? Will he not conclude that he is obliged to examine nicely his principles, and not to trust his soul to the representations of men who have not scrupled to depart from truth?

The prosecution of men for their mode of worship in England, besides the prejudice it raises against the protestant religion, and its undeniable duplicity, is attended by another effect, to which Englishmen ought to be very attentive. The genius of the English constitution is formed for generous empire; but the laws against the papists is a downright contradiction to it. They were originally enacted to complement an arbitrary court; accordingly, like the seeds of disorder and death that lurk in the human body in its greatest vigour, these laws contain the principles of universal religious oppression in the bosom of liberty. A society united by the most furious kind of enthusiasm, that admits not  
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of the pleadings of reason or compassion, thinks proper, under the pretence of a reformation of manners, to prosecute papists. Let us suppose that this zealous sect, by the popularity and vehemence of its preachers, their claims to extraordinary sanctity, and the alluring hypocrisy which invites every man to feel and mistake his worst passions, for the influence of the divinity, draw in such a majority of the croud, as to be able to wrest the power out of the hands of the national church. Can it be supposed that they would not find it equally necessary for the reformation of manners to abolish the episcopal order, of which they stand not in need; to turn the national clergy out of their churches to make room for themselves, to deny them toleration as the puritans did before, and to punish them for the marks and doctrines of antichrist, which they already find so clearly about them? I have before shewn, that any religion upon earth may be found criminal in the same manner that popery is, therefore the prosecutions carried on against papists, give sanction to universal persecution, and at the same time, habituate the minds of the people, to the tyrannic and un pitying spirit of enthusiasm.

As to the subtle cruelty that feeds the passion of prosecution, I mean the falsehoods and misrepresentations that from time to time are buzzed into the ear of the public, to keep up the hatred against papists, and to give a plausible colour for aggrieving and distressing them, I shall say little of it, because God the father of mankind, of protestants and papists, has with his own hand, inscribed the human heart with a law, and fixed a natural abhorrence there to malice and treachery. However, I cannot but take notice of an effect of this malignant spirit, which future lovers of science will deplore and be ashamed of. It is, that the system of distorting the doctrines, and misrepresenting the actions of their fellow creatures, in order to do them mischief, is not confined to the clergy and fanatics, whose purposes alone it serves. The Historians, and writers of genius, who appear candidates in the lists of fame, enter into the ungenerous plot. Truth is not the measure of the praises or dispraises of the dead. The  
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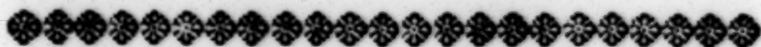
croud of protestant historians, think it necessary to the merit of their works, to say something very bitter, and very ill natured of catholics. Philosophers quit the sciences, and the rapturous hopes of knowledge, to study the various prospects in which the actions of men can possibly be viewed, to find an odious light, in which to represent the papist. The plunderer or traitor is profanely embalmed by fame, and the virtuous and innocent, after suffering the wrongs of life, are a second time wounded in their reputations. The few, the generous few, amongst the writers who refuse to make this human sacrifice, are looked upon with a suspicious eye. Collier the ecclesiastical historian, is considered as an enemy, amongst protestants, for his integrity; and Burnet, after being convicted of whole volumes of conscious falsehoods, is still applauded and quoted. If none but blockheads and enthusiasts had deserted truth and rectitude of heart, it is what one might expect and forgive; but when men of real genius do so, who were formed by nature to take truth out of obscurity, and to defend suffering innocence, then every faithful lover of virtue hangs down his head, and blushes at the prostitution.

Mr. President, the tendency of the whole of what I have said, is to place in a strong clear light, the expediency of opposing popery by simple truth and the gospel; and to shew that falsehood and prosecution, are not the proper guardians of the protestant religion. Nothing is more certain, than that every man who really has an high idea of the reformation, must think so; and that those who desperately contend to preserve the vulgar misrepresentations and slanders, for the good of the protestant cause, and think it undone if it loses their assistance, give up that cause already as lost in their consciences, and prove that they dare not trust it to reason or truth; without considering the inference every one must make, if it cannot be defended by reason and truth, or if its only security rest in deception and imposition. My antagonists may strain hard against their consciences, to preserve in credit the misrepresentations made of papists, and of their tenets; they may say a thousand passionate things of the Freethinker, who exposes the

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Elufinian myſtery ; but whatever evaſion, whatever art or eloquence they may uſe, nothing will prove an equivalent to ſimple truth : and every impartial looker-on will judge, that it is more honeſt to acknowledge directly the uſual falſhoods and miſrepresentations, to condemn the treachery of attacking papifts in that manner, to reject religious proſecution agreeable to their principles, and to betake themſelves to their natural arms for converſion, which are reaſon and the goſpel.



## ADVERTISEMENT.

**A**T parting with my candid reader, I think myſelf obliged to give him a caution that may be very neceſſary to him, in forming a judgment upon the whole of the preſent controverſy, about the juſtice of allowing toleration to catholics ; it is, that if any answer appear to the Free-Examination, or any *conſiderations on the ſtate of the controverſy*, he reſt not ſatisfied with the pretenſions of the title-page for an answer, or for a true ſtate of the queſtion, but that he look attentively into the body of the work, and ſee if it conſiſt of any thing more, than the very objections answered here, picked up, and put once more in array, without taking the leaſt notice of the answers. It were to be wiſhed, the conduct of thoſe gentlemen who wrote againſt the firſt part expreſſly, or againſt the ſubſtance of it, and who acknowledged to have read it, did not oblige me to collect the principal points that require an answer, that a reader may not be impoſed upon, and that he may ſee plainly without much trouble, whether the controverſy be really ſtated, or the foregoing ſheets answered. What I am going to ſay will alſo be of uſe to a perſon who is willing to refute me.

1. The Freethinker's letters that brought on the controverſy, have two points in view : the one to bring candid proteſtants, to ſee and explode the ſlanders that were deceitfully employed to draw perſecution and calamities on papifts. If papifts be wicked and dangerous,

rous, let them be condemned for their wickedness, but it must be forever cruel and unjust to condemn them for that of which they are not guilty. In a fair and honest state of the controversy, it is plain the weight of the calumnies that oppress them. and prejudice their judges, ought to be taken off, and that papists ought to be openly acquitted of the charges of which they are innocent. yet the pretended considerers, instead of candidly giving up the slanders in express terms, as just men would undoubtedly do, have endeavoured by every evasive and indirect method to keep them in credit. What those slanders are, may be found through the Freethinker's letters, or they may be seen, for the most part, collected together in that signed Fair Plea, and in the discourse that follows it, to page 155.

2. A second point the Freethinker had in view was, to bring the clamorous enemies of papists, who spoke so loudly about the growth of popery, to consider and account for that effect, against such mighty odds as it has to struggle with, otherwise than by their own unchristian conduct, their persecuting spirit, their frauds, and the little reliance they had on truth or reason; all of which naturally tend to give a reflecting man a violent suspicion of their honesty, and to beget a favourable idea of popery. The Freethinker insists, that even if any other causes could be produced to account for the advance of popery, yet these he mentions must have their own proper effect, because slander and persecution for ever tend to disgust honest men, and the more collusively the persecution is carried on, the more it begets detestation and prejudice. The difference between the persecution of the inquisition, and the persecution that is produced, by calumny is, that the one is blunt, plain-meaning cruelty, that may, originally, be easily avoided, because it avows its purpose, and gives you sufficient warning: the other is treacherous cruelty, that tells you it does no mischief, and never persecutes, while it is charging the mine, and putting the match to the train that is to destroy you.

3. After the Freethinker's letters and a few others, appear Publius's discourses; he attempts to prove in discourse the first, that if it be necessary to prosecute those sects who themselves prosecute, then it is necessary

ry to prosecute almost all christian sects, and that if men who are always intolerants, in fact, where they have power, and avow it, ought to be prosecuted, then the calvinists and all puritan sects ought to be prosecuted, and it is inequitable to single out the papists alone to oppression or intoleration.

4. Publius, in discourse the second, attempts to prove, that papists have no principle of persecution in their church, and in discourse the third and fourth, that the persecuting and sanguinary laws in popish countries against protestants are not owing to religious principle, but to the natural fears and jealousies of government, that operate alike in all nations, be their religion what it will; here are laid in open view, the proofs and arguments that the prosecutors of popery are particularly under a necessity of refuting. One would imagine, that a person who read the Free Examinations, ought to answer them in a satisfactory manner, before he thought of renewing a charge that seems to be very solidly confuted in these discourses. It is well known by all reasoners, that disputants who wilfully slip aside from an objection they perfectly know, must be supposed tacitly to allow its truth; and that in controversy to assert a proposition, and yet to allow full force to an objection that destroy that proposition, is perverseness and wilful obstinacy. What proposition is it, however absurd, that a person of skill is not able to prove triumphantly, provided he has the privilege of overlooking all objections?

It is plain then, that a man who takes up his pen to answer the Free Examination, and is willing to satisfy the common sense the public have of honesty and truth, must either candidly acknowledge the slanders and prevarications that have persecuted papists, or demonstrate, that the instances of calumny and prevarication, complained of by the Freethinker, are mere invention, and never existed. If he contends for prosecuting papists, he should shew that they are not alone singled out of sects guilty of persecution, with particular enmity: and if he charges upon them an intolerant spirit, as the crime that renders them insufferable, he should shew why the calvinists, who always openly avow an in-

tolerant spirit, and always persecute where they have power, are nevertheless tolerated. And it is particularly incumbent on him, to prove against the second, third, and fourth discourse, and against the supplement in this second part, that papists have in their church a principle of persecution, and that the oppressive laws against protestants in popish states, are not owing to the natural universal fears and jealousies of government, occasioned by the warlike spirit of the first reformers, and by their readiness to take up arms against their sovereigns. It is by replying to those points only, that an answer can be made to the Free Examination, because these are the points he insists upon, for to pretend to speak to a man's charge, in a title page, and to take no sort of notice of it after, is an insult and abuse upon the understanding of Readers. I need not add, that a fair antagonist will not object to catholics at large, the doctrines of a few private persons, that have been publicly condemned by assemblies of popish clergy, and by popish nations, without taking notice that they were so condemned.

What is added in this second part, further lays open the futility and dishonesty of the pretences under which catholics are aggrieved. An attempt is made in it to prove, that catholics are obliged by their principles to keep faith with heretics, that they are persecuted and oppressed in these nations for their mere mode of worship, and that the popular odium was first raised, and is still kept up against them for sinister ends and purposes. The person who attacks this pamphlet, with a sincere desire to come at the truth, which ought to be every man's object in controversy, is desired to allow expressly all he thinks just, and true, and not to pretend to answer the whole, whilst he only contests a part. He is further requested, to make his quotations from the Free Examination in its own express words, and neither to leave out any part of the sentence essential to the meaning of the whole, or to misconstrue any sentence out of the meaning it bears in the original arrangement. I am sorry the conduct of the writers against the Free Examination has made these cautions necessary.



It is hoped that through the course of the foregoing tracts, the reader will discern the strong passion for truth, as well as for liberty of conscience, that inspires the writers. They despise and detest the eager ambition of victory, the defence of party prejudices, the evasion and artifice of argument that so often enter into controversies of importance, in which the good of mankind are concerned; and they promise candidly for themselves, that if through human error, of which they do not pretend to be free, they have fallen into any mistakes or wrong reasonings, they will expressly rectify them, and yield to truth the moment it appears, with the sincerest acknowledgments to the friendly hand that directs them. They are sensible, however parties and sects who have the misfortune to be divided by religion, speak of separate interests, yet, that this is a fatal mistake, and that it is no man's interest either to deceive or be deceived. They are conscious the happiness and virtue of man, without any exception, are indissolubly connected with truth, and that he who is justly convinced of an error or wrong judgment, and who has discovered a prejudice in his own mind, has gained a vast advantage in the contest, and is truly enriched by that discovery.

The End.



SEASONABLE  
REFLECTIONS  
HUMBLY OFFERED TO THE  
CONSIDERATION  
OF THE  
LEGISLATURE,  
BY SOME  
*ROMAN CATHOLICS,*  
OF  
IRELAND.







SEASONABLE

REFLECTIONS, &c.

I.

**I**N any Country, REAL Punishment operating perpetually against PROBLEMATICAL Guilt, is the highest Solecism in Politics.

II.

**I**f different Religious Doctrines are connived at in such a Country, Parties will be apt to misrepresent their Adversaries. The CIVIL Principles therefore of THE MORE OBNOXIOUS party, should by no means be taken from men ill-informed, much less from men INDISPOSED to be well-informed.

III.

**T**HE legal Punishments inflicted on any set of obnoxious Religionists should undoubtedly receive their Justification from the AVOWED CIVIL Principles and general Conduct of such Religionists; They should receive no Justification from mere local OPINIONS or temporary Doctrines, chargeable only on Those who maintain them.

IV. I

## IV.

IF it should appear that the Case of the Irish Papists has been prejudged, would it not be worth the while (in the present State of the Nation) to give it a Re-hearing, and examine WITNESSES instead of ACCUSERS?

## V.

THE Papists of Ireland have been long charged with CIVIL Principles inconsistent with the Security of our free and Protestant Government.

## VI.

ON the SUPPOSITION of the Truth of that Charge, all the incapacitating Laws against the Irish Papists (since the year 1703) have been founded.

## VII.

ON the CERTAINTY that the Charge is well-grounded; it will admit of no doubt but that the Legal Restraints on the Industry of that set of Men, ought to be continued in PERPETUAL Operation, because INDIGENT Security, is to be preferred to a DANGEROUS Prosperity.

## VIII.

ON the FALSEHOOD of that Charge much Evil to this nation may be grafted. We might substitute Opinion to Knowledge, and mistake greatly in the distribution of Rewards and Punishments.

## IX.

MAY it not import the Legislature AT THE PRESENT TIME, in particular, to inquire whether the Proofs brought to support the above Charge against the

the majority of our Manufacturers and Farmers be sufficient.

## X.

SHOULD the Incompetency of such proofs be discovered, it would follow that we have long cherished a hurtful Mistake: — That our penal Laws have operated, for seventy years past, without their PROPER Object: — That the General Good has been obstructed: — That Injury to the Public has not only been LICENSED, but ENFORCED by LAW: And that Individuals have been exposed to Punishments no way proportioned, in kind or degree, to their CIVIL Demerits.

## XI.

SHOULD Irish Papists be willing to give such a TEST of their CIVIL Orthodoxy, as would be sufficient for the Security of the Civil Establishment, it may be presumed that they cannot be proper Objects of legal Incapacities, which retain them from co-operating *with* THE PUBLIC, *for* THE PUBLIC, in such Services as Dissenters from the established Religion can be entrusted with.

## XII.

SHOULD Irish Papists be ready to tender an Oath of Allegiance to his Majesty King GEORGE the Third, and profess Religiously that no Power on Earth CAN ABSOLVE THEM FROM SUCH A DUTY, some Reasons must exist for rejecting in this Country a TEST found effectual and profitable in several other Protestant States on the Continent, particularly in Holland, in Brandenburg, in Saxony and in his Majesty's German Dominions.

## XIII. should

## XIII.

SHOULD Irish Papists, in the most solemn manner declare, that it is no tenet of their Religion "That Faith is not to be kept with Heretics; — That Popes have a right to depose Kings, or transfer their Dominions to any Invader; — That the Roman Pontiff can dispense with Perjury, or authorize the Commission of any MORAL or CIVIL Evil;" It may be presumed that the Religious *Renunciation* of such Odious Principles may qualify the *Renouncers* for a reception into the Pale of our CIVIL COMMUNION.

## XIV.

TESTS are no light things, with Men who make Religion, (good or bad) a Matter of Conscience. — Should any Papists among us, blinded by *school Opinions*, or rather influenced by Doctrines *never generally admitted*, refuse giving Government a TEST OF FIDELITY, their *Recusancy* would be useful Information, and Information to be depended upon. — It would afford a Proof of their Ill-affection to the Civil Establishment; but it would at the same time afford a Proof of their Sincerity also, and of their Abhorrence of Perjury to serve any Cause whatsoever. — Men of such a Cast would be easily detected, and their Error, as Subjects, should only affect THEMSELVES: It should by no means affect *Those who renounce it*; But the Legislature in such a Case, and in no other, would be enabled to direct the Penalties, on the face of our Statutes, to their proper Objects, and draw a precise Line between CONSTITUTIONAL and *Anti-constitutional Papists*. — In such a Case, our Law-givers would be in Possession of the mighty Advantage of correcting the Mistakes, avoiding the Injustice, and preventing the Destruction ever attendant on indiscriminate Punishments.

## XV. Good



## XV.

GOOD Converts to our Civil Government can be very easily obtained, and seem to prevent application.—— Converts to the Established Religion come in slowly:—— Their number is not great; and the Experience of seventy years past demonstrates, that the *Rewards, and Punishments of Law*, have but a very tardy operation, when opposed to the *Rewards and Punishments of Religion* (whether True or False in its Fundamentals)—— The latter frequently rousing our Hopes and Fears, have a mighty Influence on the human Heart, and (excepting Those who come in from Conviction) have been overlooked, chiefly by Gentlemen whose Inheritances (soon after the Demise of the late King William) have been exposed to a Gavel Partition on Nonconformity to the established Worship—— The Conversion of such Men had a Motive too powerful with the rich and luxurious part of Mankind. It arose from the Grief of seeing what they deemed their Birth-Right transferred to another; it arose from the Pride of Family, from the greatness of the Reward, and particularly, from the Rigor of the Penalty, in a Fall from all Consequence in one's Country to a prospect of invincible Poverty.—— We are not to wonder if such Motives had their Effects on Some; or that others (while they had the Power) disposed of their Inheritances, and flew with the Value into foreign Lands, to the Diminution of our circulating Specie.

## XVI.

IN the present Distress of the Public, from the decline of our Manufactures, from Absentees Abroad, and from legal Restraints on such great numbers at home; this Nation wants Cordials to strengthen, not the Emetic of a new Penal Law to damp the little Vigor we have left.—— The Papists of Ireland through a Course of seventy Years have performed a long Quarantine of political Health; a term found sufficient for emancipating

emancipating the *Jews* themselves after an equally long Captivity in *Babylon*.

## XVII.

WITHOUT permanent Property to be a pledge of their good behaviour to Government; without any REAL security for even a monied Interest, without feeling the Joy of finding themselves at home in their native Country, they can only express a WISH that their Fidelity, as Subjects, may obtain some Reward, and that the hardships they endure may be mitigated. — But whether the Grant of such a Mitigation or the further extension of new Penal Laws be most eligible, must be humbly submitted to the Wisdom of the Legislature.



F I N I S.

